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かまたきみこ

ぶんか社

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恋と任務の間で悩む
くの一の痛快コメディーから
毒にまみれたフランス王妃の苦悩まで。
名手かまたきみこが時空を超えて紡ぎ出す！
繊細で一途で逞しい乙女たちのストーリー！

収録作品●白雪姫の毒りんご／お江戸恋模様のOLくノ一／レースの約束／ありす

Kimiko Kamata

まぼろし恋奇譚

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KAMATA KIMIKO PROFILE

Debut in 1992 with "Flower Bouquet"(Asahi Sonorama "Odd Stories for Sleepless Nights" vol.11). Aries. Blood-type B. Keeps a rabbit called Awasumi as a pet. Important works are "KATANA", "Legend Academy", "Dream Eater" and others.

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Cover Design©Hiromi Miyake

まぼろし
恋奇譚
こいきたん
かまたきみこ

まぼろし恋奇譚

もくじ

白鳥忍法外伝……

お江戸恋舞踊……

DOLL……

レースの約束……

ありす……

あとがき……

Swan Ninja Art Anecdotes
From the ballet "Swan Lake"

SO THIS IS
SHIRATORI CASTLE THAT I'VE HEARD RUMORS ABOUT...
OF COURSE, THE ROOF TILES AND WALLS ARE AS WHITE AS SNOW
IT'S REALLY BEAUTI-FUL.
WAIT!
YOU WON'T RUN AWAY FROM ME!

A NIN-JA?!
A NIN...
SO YOU'RE RUNNING AWAY?
Here's a sickle and chain!
WAAH!
swish
swoosh

BA DUMP

GOD DAMN IT
Pyuh
YOU'RE AS BAD AS AN AMA-TEUR
HM... SO WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS?
smack
F...
FOR A WHITE... NINJA... TO BE HERE...
AH!
BLOOD!
IT'S JUST A SCRA-TCH
BE-CAUSE OF ME!
I SELL MEDI-CINE!
tear apart
LEAVE IT TO ME!

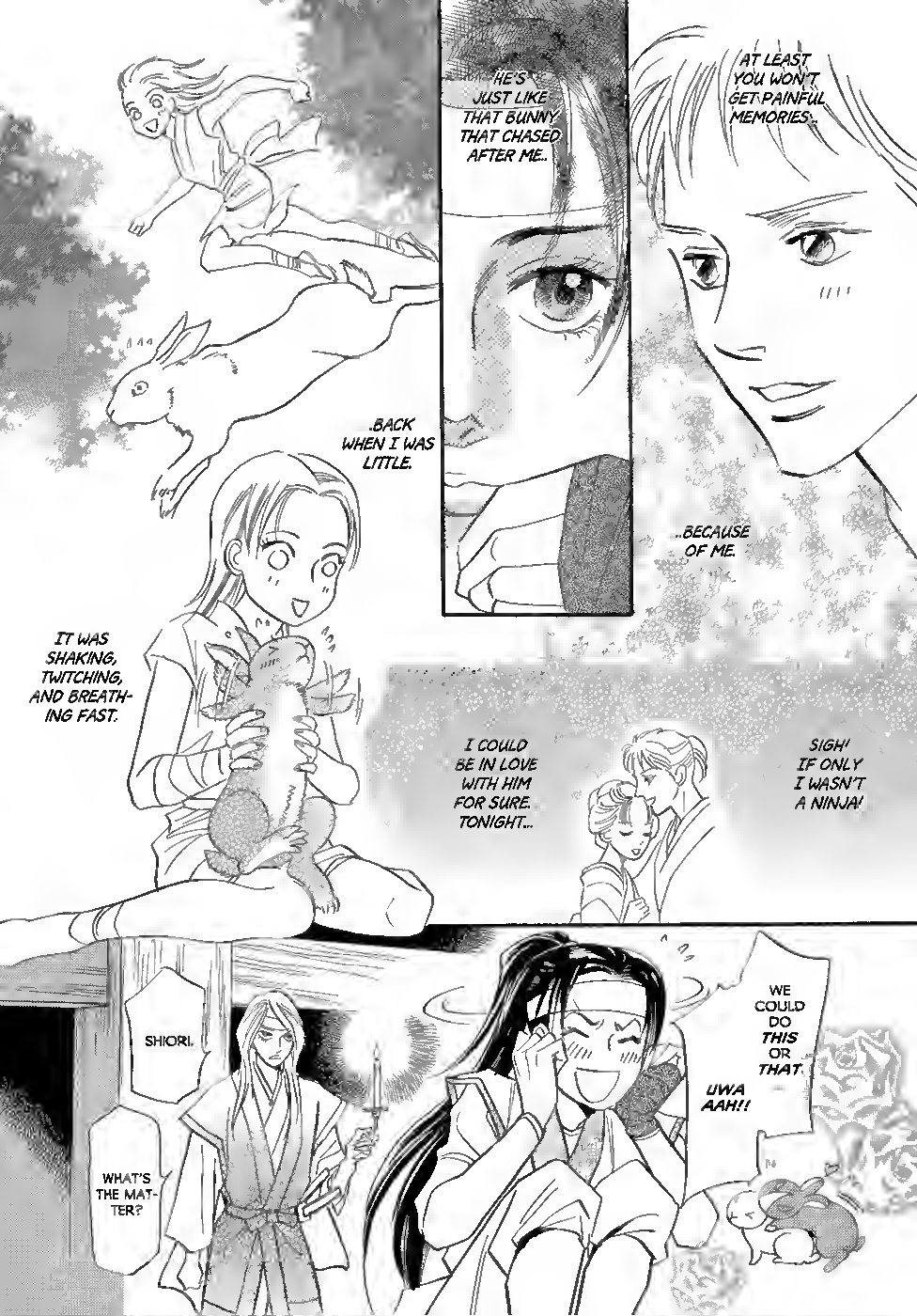
THESE GUYS... WHAT'RE THEY DOING?
stare
AH... ERR...
OUR MEDICINE WORKS... VERY WELL, SO.
hmph
I THINK IT'S ALRIGHT WITH THIS...
HEY!

HA HA.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, AT LEAST YOU WON'T GET PAINFUL MEMORIES BECAUSE OF ME
EH!
THEY'VE SEEN MY FACE YOU...
...TAKE CARE OF THAT GUY
surprise
HE'S SO NICE... BUT...
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU HURT YOURSELF
THIS GUY...

I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS FAVOR!
MY... NAME IS NAGARE!
DON'T COME CLOSE TO THE CASTLE ANY-MORE
YOU AND I WE SAW NOTHING
pat
STOP IT!
WHY . IS MY CHEST HURTING?

Alright!
WE'LL PLACE THE SOLDIERS IN GROUPS OF 5000 AT STRATEGIC PLACES FIVE LEAGUES AWAY FROM EDO CASTLE AND OCCUPY THE MAIN ROADS
AND THEN – I-TADA- WILL ATTACK THEM FROM THE NORTH
AS EXPECTED OF YOU, MY LORD!
AND THEN, IF YOU CAN TAKE OVER THE WESTERN GATE, EDO CASTLE WILL FALL DOOOWN!
THAT'S A FINE STRATEGY.
FINALLY, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, WE HAVE STORED UP ENOUGH WEAPONS IN THIS SECRET STORE HOUSE
I, KASUGA YOSHIMASA, WILL REIGN THIS COUNTY! WE'LL RETURN TO THE CASTLE AND HAVE A FEAST!
WA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
BEING BORN AS A STRONG MAN,

WHAT AN OPTIMISTIC STRATEGY. YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE OVER THE COUNTRY WITH THIS.
HOW STUPID
WAHAHA
EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE, I'VE SPENT ALL MY TIME STUDYING THE NINJA ARTS...
Hey pay attention to where you're walking, please!
Let's drink!
Sake!
THE ART OF FIRE, THE ART OF WATER, THE ART OF PHANTOMS... I'VE MASTERED ALL THESE
Yippie!
BUT OF ALL PEOPLE TO SERVE IT JUST HAD TO BE THIS IDIOTIC LORD..
Our Lord Cha-cha-cha!
Yippie!
WHAT'S GOING TO BECOME OF ME?
Wahaha!!
Our Lord is the best!
THAT MAN TODAY..
HOW WAS HE CALLED AGAIN...? NAGARE?
HEHE


HE'S JUST LIKE THAT BUNNY THAT CHASED AFTER ME...
AT LEAST YOU WON'T GET PAINFUL MEMORIES...
..BACK WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
..BECAUSE OF ME.
IT WAS SHAKING, TWITCHING, AND BREATHING FAST.
I COULD BE IN LOVE WITH HIM FOR SURE. TONIGHT...
SIGH! IF ONLY I WASN'T A NINJA!
SHIORI.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
WE COULD DO THIS OR THAT.
UWA AAH!!

TOMORROW, WE WILL HEAD BACK TO TOWN...
AND THEN FIND AND INTERROGATE HIM THOROUGHLY ALRIGHT?
DOWN AT THE CASTLE, THERE WERE NEWS OF A NEW NINJA THAT WAS SMUGGLED INSIDE
HAYATO-SAMA...
WHEN OUR LORD... ATTACKS EDO...
WE WILL PROBABLY FIGHT ALONGSIDE HIM, WON'T WE..?
OF COURSE
WE, THE PEOPLE OF SHIRATORI, FOLLOW KASUGA-SAMA'S ORDERS
DO YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS, SHIORI?
AREN'T I... ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE?
IF IT'S SOMETHING LIKE OVERLOOKING COWARDLY MERCHANTS, I'M WILLING TO PUT A BLIND EYE TO IT
BUT... DON'T FORGET...

APART FROM THIS CASTLE...
DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER PATH IN YOUR LIFE?
REUNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY!
I'M THE NEXT SHOGUN!
THE SHOOOOGUUUN!
HMM-MM. SO YOU CAN'T STAND UP ALL THE TIME WITH THIS INJURY, HUH
YOU CAN SAY THAT
FOR US SOLDIERS SERVING KASUGA-SAMA, THE DAILY TRAINING IS VERY IMPORTANT.
OH, WOW! IT'S REALLY EFFECTIVE!
THE PAIN I'VE BEEN FEELING FOR OVER A YEAR IS ALREADY GETTING WEAKER!

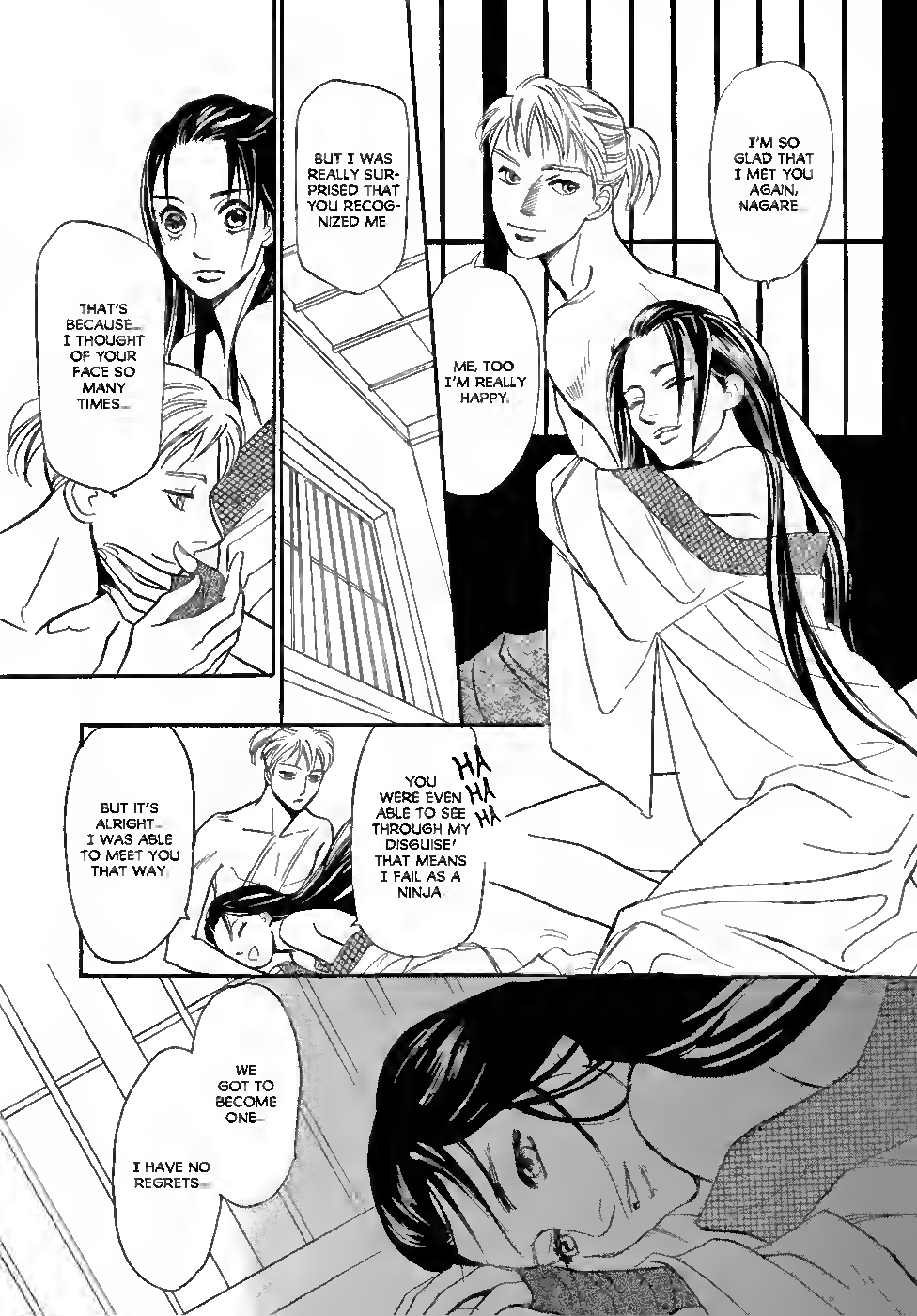
THE SOLDIERS IN THIS FEUDAL DOMAIN ARE QUITE THE BATTLE-FANS...
THAT WAS THE TENTH PERSON WHO SAID THAT...
HOOH!
IT'S CALLED "TAPING" AND IT HELPS WITH ALL KINDS OF MOVEMENTS
IT'S A PATENT OF OUR COMPANY.
THAT'S OUR LORD'S FAVORITE PHRASE! THANKS, YOU HELPED ME OUT A LOT!
"WARRIORS ARE SUPPOSED TO OFFER THEMSELVES TO BATTLES AT ALL TIMES!"
THEIR FINANCIAL SITUATION SHOULD BE GOING WELL.
IS EXTREMELY WELL-DEVELOPED IN TRADE AND AGRICULTURE
BUT STILL, THIS DOMAIN—
THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING...
AND ON TOP OF THAT, NINJAS ARE KILLING EACH OTHER AROUND THE CASTLE

NINJA, HUH...
blush
PHEW!
SHE WAS CUTE ...
I WONDER IF I CAN MEET HER AGAIN.
WAAH!
A THIEF!
GIVE THAT BACK!
THAT'S IMPOR-TANT TO ME!
whoosh

throw
OUCH!
CLATTER
THUD
AH!

NAGARE?
YOU ARE...
THAT NINJA FROM BEFORE..
EH
HE WAS THINKING OF ME, TOO?
THAT SURE SURPRISED ME JUST WHEN I WAS THINKING OF YOU, MY LUGGAGE GETS STOLEN.
SHIORI, NOW IS THE TIME...
BUT... IT'S FINE IF I DO IT EVEN JUST ONCE TO EXPERIENCE BEING CONNECTED WITH THE PERSON I LOVE.
AFTER ALL, A NINJA'S LIFE IS ONLY THAT OF A SACRIFICED PIECE.
GRAB
WITH THIS, I CAN DO MY BEST FOR THE FUTURE!
IT'S YOUR LAST CHANCE... TO LIVE AS A SINGLE GIRL!

WAH!
NINJA TECH-NIQUE ...
tong
SAY—
She's fast!
cough
gulp
"WOOING SWAN!"
Wait that's not really a Ninja technique though


I'M SO GLAD THAT I MET YOU AGAIN, NAGARE...
BUT I WAS REALLY SURPRISED THAT YOU RECOGNIZED ME
ME, TOO I'M REALLY HAPPY.
THAT'S BECAUSE... I THOUGHT OF YOUR FACE SO MANY TIMES...
HA HA HA
YOU WERE EVEN ABLE TO SEE THROUGH MY DISGUISE! THAT MEANS I FAIL AS A NINJA
BUT IT'S ALRIGHT... I WAS ABLE TO MEET YOU THAT WAY...
WE GOT TO BECOME ONE...
I HAVE NO REGRETS...

I WANT— TO MEET YOU MANY TIMES.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
"I HAVE NO REGRETS"—?
I WOULD DIE FOR THIS AT ANY TIME..
DON'T SAY THAT SO EASILY!
BUT WE'RE NOT AT WAR RIGHT NOW, ARE WE?
I... I'M A NINJA!
BUT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO!
I ALSO WAS AFRAID OF MAKING A DECISION WITH ONLY THIS!
THAT I BECAME LIKE THIS WITH YOU... OUT OF MY OWN FREE WILL!
IT'S THE FIRST TIME FOR ME!

WH...
FWIP
BUT YOU PROBABLY WON'T UNDER-STAND!!
WAIT A MOMENT...
I HAVEN'T EVEN ASKED FOR YOUR NAME, YET
SHIORI...?
WHY IS SHE IN SUCH A HURRY?

DON'T TELL ME... SHIORI . WITH HIM...?
...FROM BACK THEN?
ISN'T THAT THE SQUIRT...
WHERE DID SHE GO?!
SO, PLEASE... DON'T DISAPPEAR SO SUD-DENLY!
AH!
I'M SERIOUS ABOUT YOU!
NINJA TECH-NIQUE - BODY CHANGE!
CHANGE INTO SHIORI!

I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE A NINJA...
turn
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE SERIOUS?
THIS.. THIS GUY.. HE SMELLS...
...OF SHIORI'S FRESH SCENT!
grip
A ninja's sense of smell is extra-ordinarily well!
YOU DON'T CARE, YOU SAY?!
Who
Osh
THUK
YOU ARE JUST SELLING YOUR MEDICINE AS A PRETEXT
IN ORDER TO SLEEP WITH NINJA WOMEN!

slap!
slap!
That...
I GOT... I GOT SLAPPED! I, THE GREAT HAYATO-SAMA, HEAD OF THE SHIRATORI PEOPLE, GOT SLAPPED!
Eeeeek!
STOP BEING SO SULKY.
shriek!
DIDN'T I SAY I WAS SERIOUS?
LET'S GET MARRIED
THERE SHOULD BE A WAY IF WE THINK HARD ABOUT IT.

sharp pain
I LOVE YOU
I STILL... HAVEN'T ASKED FOR YOUR NAME
HAYA..
SH-SHIORI!
Eek!
Grab
NAGARE, WAS IT...? THAT GUY, HOW ADMIRABLE
phew...
MAKING MY HEART BEAT THAT MUCH...
A NINJA... AND A NORMAL GUY. THAT'S A FORBIDDEN LOVE.
BUT JUST HANDLING OVER SHIORI TO THE OTHER GUY IS A BIT ANNOYING, TOO.
SHOULDN'T THE GREAT ME MAYBE PLAY A TRICK?
JUST TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THEY SERIOUS?

HUH?
HAYATO-SAMA IS WITH AN UNFAMI-LIAR GUY.
...
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CASTLE.
THE LORD IS EXPECTING YOU.
HAYATO-SAMA IS...
MEETING THE LORD... WITH NAGARE?!

BATHUMP
He just can't calm down
THAT GUY.. WHY IS HE LOOKING AROUND SO MUCH?
I'M SURE YOU'RE WATCHING US FROM SOMEWHERE.
SHIORI-SAN.
MY LORD
OH, THANKS A LOT!
THIS IS THE DRUG MERCHANT I'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT
YES!
I HEARD THAT YOUR SHOULDERS WERE HURTING, DEAR LORD
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT YOUR MEDICINE AND BANDAGES WORK WELL...
Ooooh!!
AND THAT'S BECAUSE YOUR BONES ARE DISJOINTED
crick
crack
IT'S CALLED CHIROPRACTIC
WHAT DID YOU DO?! MY SHOULDER FEELS BETTER!
WHAT A CHEEKY GUY
A DRUG MERCHANT, HUH

TAP TAP TAP TAP
THE HAPPINESS OF A WOMAN WAS SUPPOSED TO END AFTER THAT ONE NIGHT!
THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT TO MYSELF THAT HOWEVER BORING MY LIFE WILL BE AFTER THIS,
I WOULD BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IT..
I...
I'M GOING TO GUARD THIS!
I WOULDN'T HAVE ANY REGRETS..
AND THAT
SHIORI—
cling
SO YOU'VE FALLEN..
FOR THAT MAN?

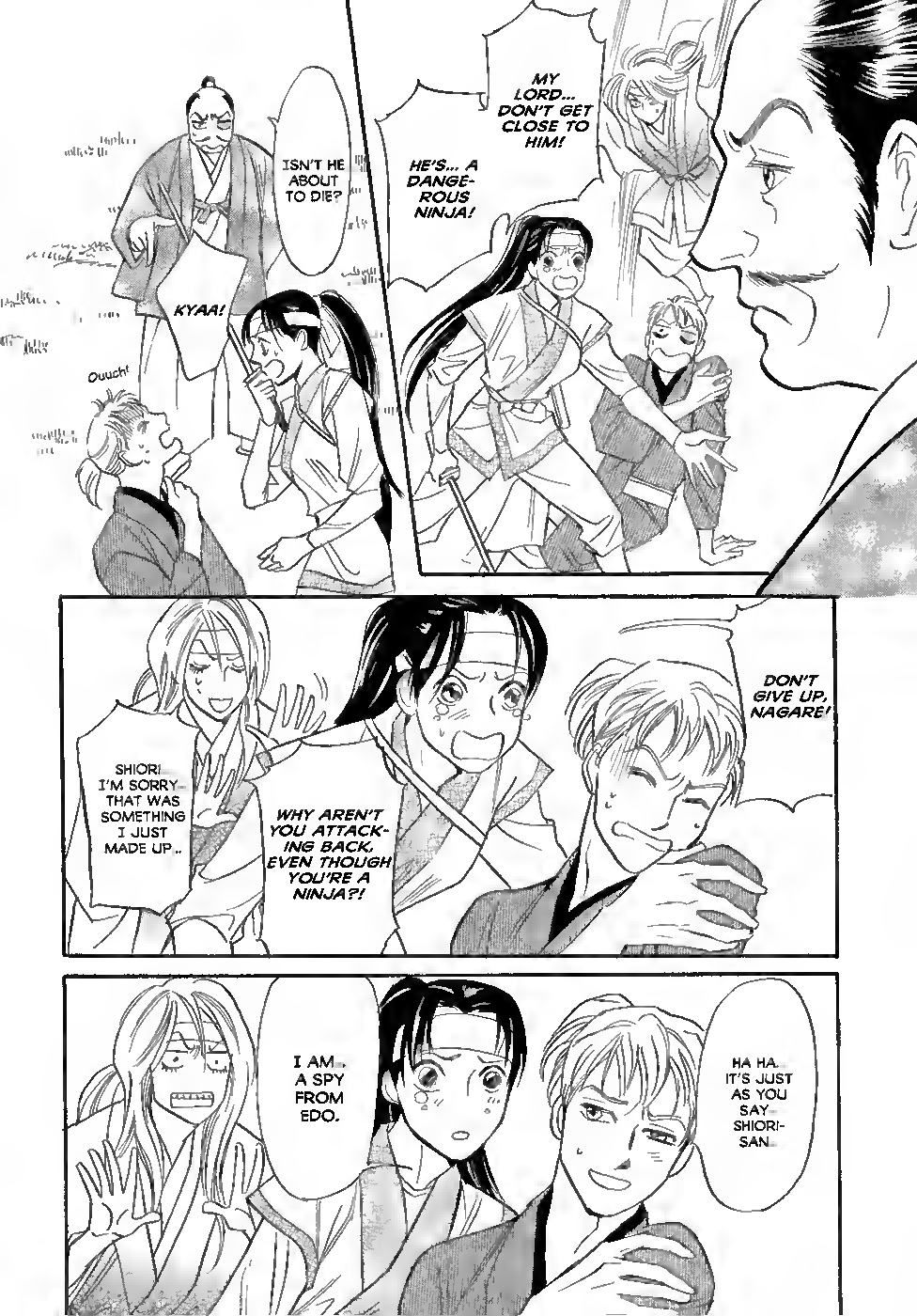
HAYATO-SAMA!!
WHEN YOU GUYS CAME OUT OF THE INN...
I SAW THAT.
SHIORI
YOU HAVE BEEN FOOLED BY THIS NAGARE PERSON
WHAT?
LISTEN WELL.
NAGARE... IS A SPY FROM EDO
HE TRIED TO GET INTO THE CASTLE BY WINNING YOUR TRUST, YOU KNOW—
TH... THAT CAN'T BE!
HE HAS NO THIRST FOR BLOOD AT ALL. THERE IS NO WAY HE COULD BE A NINJA!
THAT'S HIS "METHOD".
AND FOR THAT REASON, I'VE BROUGHT HIM INTO THE CASTLE.

EH?!
SHIORI... THIS TIME, YOU'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM
I'LL LET THAT NAGARE LIVE IN THE CASTLE FOR A WHILE AND HAVE HIM WATCHED
UNDERSTOOD, HAYATO-SAMA!
ON THE DAY WE FINALLY KILL HIM,
I SHALL HOLD A CELEBRATION WITH YOU
SAY, NAGARE
WHAT'S THE NAME OF THIS BIRD?
SAY, NAGARE
WHY DON'T WE GO HAWKING?
IS HIS SMILE A FALSE ONE, TOO?
NAGARE... NAGARE, HE...
DECEIVED ME?
ALL THIS TIME, I'VE ALSO WANTED YOU
IT'S NOT A BAD DEAL, DON'T YOU THINK?

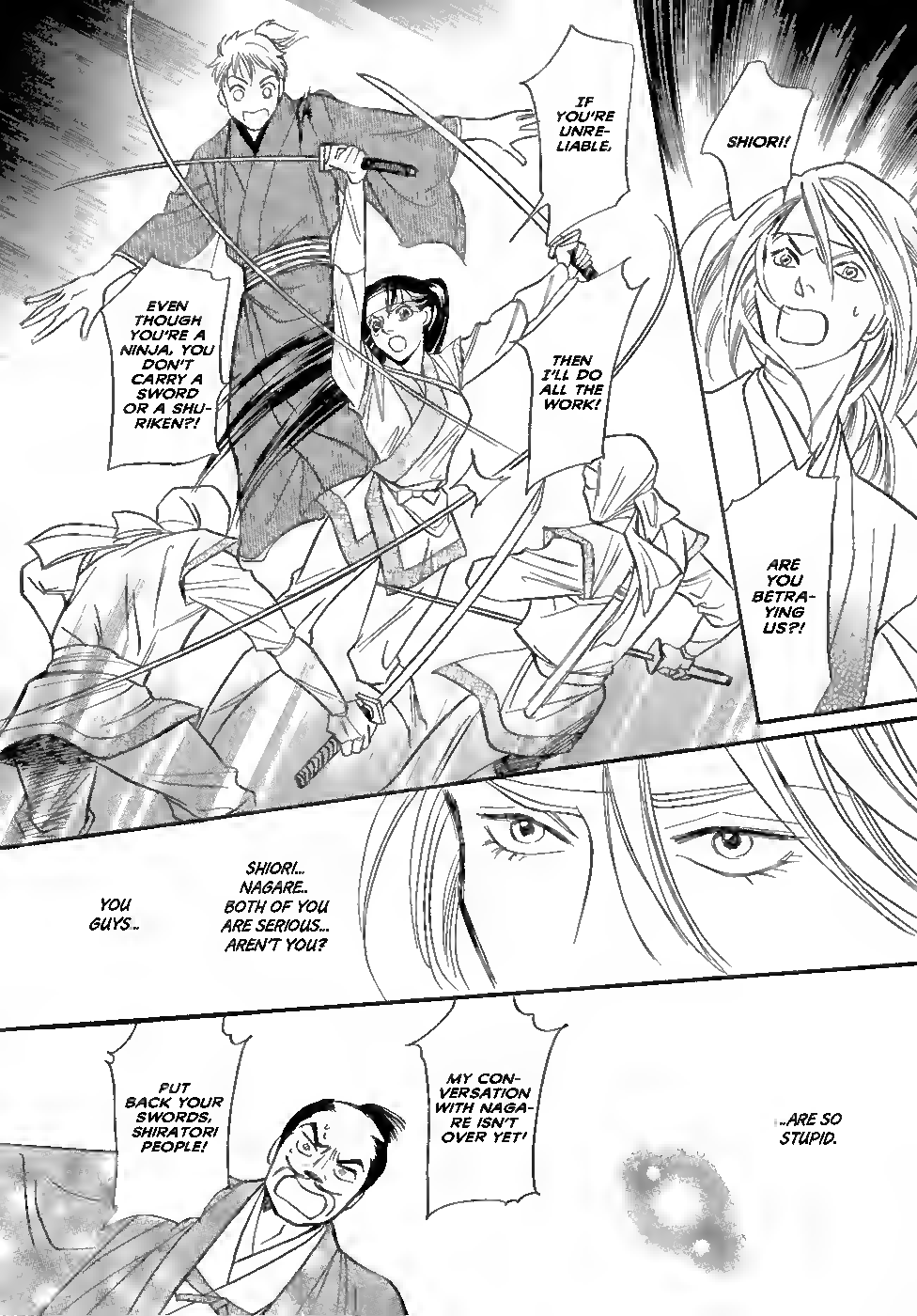
IT'S THAT SMILE'S FAULT
AND THOSE... BUNNY-LIKE, INNOCENT EYES!
HAS ALSO TAKEN A LIKING TO HIM
THE LORD
HE'S A SPY!!!
NAGA-RE,
WHERE ARE YOU?
NAGARE!
I'LL FINISH YOU!!!
THAT... DOESN'T HAVE ANY-THING...
TO DO WITH ME ANY-MORE... RIGHT...
GIVING PEOPLE BANDA-GES...
ALL JUST TO INFIL-TRATE THE CASTLE... AND WHEN HE'S IN THERE...
SAYING HE WANTS TO KNOW ME MORE ...

SHE WANTS TO SETTLE THINGS WITH NAGARE, I GUESS.
THAT SHIORI.
OH
AS I THOUGHT, YOU'RE...
WHY DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
SHIORI!
YOU DON JUAN!
...A LIAR!!!
WAAH!

I KNOW YOU'RE A NINJA!
SHOW ME YOUR TRUE FACE!
SHIORI!
STOP IT!
HE'S...
SLA
SH
SO THAT'S WHERE YOU'VE BEEN
NAGARE!


MY LORD... DON'T GET CLOSE TO HIM!
HE'S... A DANGE-ROUS NINJA!
ISN'T HE ABOUT TO DIE?
KYAA!
Ouuch!
DON'T GIVE UP, NAGARE!
WHY AREN'T YOU ATTACK-ING BACK, EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A NINJA?!
SHIORI I'M SORRY— THAT WAS SOMETHING I JUST MADE UP..
I AM... A SPY FROM EDO.
HA HA. IT'S JUST AS YOU SAY— SHIORI-SAN.

LORD!
WE'LL PRO-TECT YOU!!
AS I THOUGHT
YOU WERE DECEIVING ME
IS THAT.. THE TRUTH?
NAGA-RE
AND EVEN IN FRONT OF US!
I'LL SLASH HIM ALL OVER!
IT'S JUST.. I..
LOVE YOU.
NAGA-RE!!
YOU FOOLED US!!!


IF YOU'RE UNRELIABLE,
THEN I'LL DO ALL THE WORK!
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A NINJA, YOU DON'T CARRY A SWORD OR A SHURIKEN?!
SHIORI!
ARE YOU BETRAYING US?!
YOU GUYS..
SHIORI.. NAGARE.. BOTH OF YOU ARE SERIOUS.. AREN'T YOU?
PUT BACK YOUR SWORDS, SHIRATORI PEOPLE!
MY CONVERSATION WITH NAGARE ISN'T OVER YET!
..ARE SO STUPID.

LORD.. I'M A NO-GOOD NINJA. I'VE NEITHER MASTERED THE SWORD NOR THE TECHNIQUES.
BUT EVEN IF THAT IS SO... I HONESTLY FELL IN LOVE WITH SHIORI-DONO, WHO'S PROTECTING THIS BEAUTIFUL CASTLE
NAGA-RE...
BUT I'VE BEEN DIS-DAINED.
MY WOUNDS AND HEART ARE HURTING. I WANT TO CRY.
MY LORD.
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO ATTACK EDO
WHAT ...?!
PLEASE HAVE A LOOK AT THIS CHALK WALL ON THE NORTH SIDE.
IT'S BECOMING RED WITH RUST.
I'M SURE YOU HAVE STORED WEAPONS IN YOUR HIDDEN STORE-HOUSE.
BUT THEY SHOULD BE RUSTY, AS WELL.

THE STORE KEEP-ER...
THE STORE KEEPER! WHAT DID HE DO?!
WE CAN ONLY USE THE WEAPONS GATHERED FROM THE PAST 1-2 YEARS...
MY GOD... THESE VASSALS, THEY..
DIDN'T WANT TO FIGHT A WAR, AFTER ALL...
MY MANLY AMBI-TIONS!
WHAT WILL BECOME OF THEM?
grip
grip
UUH...
KASUGA-SAMA...
THANKS TO YOU TRYING TO MAKE MONEY IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR YOUR ATTACK ON EDO,
YOU'VE LENT A HAND TO THE PROMO-OF INDUSTRY IN THIS DOMAIN.

EVEN WITHOUT RESORTING TO WAR,
YOU'RE A GOOD LORD, KASUGA-SAMA.
THIS CASTLE-TOWN IS SO RICH AND LIVELY.
MELT THESE RUSTY WEAPONS AND TURN THEM INTO PLOWS AND HOES FOR THE FARMERS.
AS HONEST AS YOU, NAGARE
I REALLY WISH I HAD MEN
KASUGA-SAMA...

How great!
Oh, really?
HE SAID I'VE BEEN JUST SIMPLY ENTHU-SIASTIC
Can't do anything about that guy!
AND EDO DIDN'T SHOW ANY WORRIES AT ALL.
REALLY?
SHIORI!
IT SEEMS KASUGA-SAMA DOESN'T HAVE ANY-THING TO BLAME!
HEY!
SHIORI!?! EHH?!
HAYA-TO
WHO ARE YOU WITH?
SHIORI.. I STILL HAVEN'T GOTTEN YOUR ANSWER
OF COURSE I WILL
YOU WILL BECOME MY WIFE, RIGHT?

NAGARE, I'M LEAVING SHIORI TO YOU.
HAYATO-SAMA!
YOU STILL CAN'T TELL ME FROM THE REAL SHIORI!
WA HA HA! YOU ARE SO NAIVE, NAGARE!
YOU TWO... BECOME HAPPY, ALRIGHT?
IT'S A LOVE-CHECK!
ER.. WELL.. THAT'S ..
Ah ah! Unrequited love!!!
THIS IS LIKE A DREAM...
THE HARD TRAINING STARTS TOMORROW
THE NINJA HERE TOOK ME IN AS WELL
Whaat? A kunoichi from the Shiraton people?
I'm making her my wife.
Nice to meet you!
Ehe

I TALKED TO YOUR LEADER ABOUT THAT BEFORE
I'LL BE TEACHING YOU THE SWORD, THE SHURIKEN AND THE SMOKE AND WATER TECHNIQUES
YOU CAN'T SKIP ANYMORE
EH?!
NAGARE, YOU SURE FOUND A NICE WIFE!
DO YOUR BEST AND TRAIN FOR HER!
TH-THROUGH A PEACEFUL WORLD, YOU CAN GET BY WITH JUST KNOWLEDGE
GET STRONGER FOR ME~
Swan Ninja Art Anecdotes
END

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Edo Love Dance
Based on P. MÉrimÉe's "Carmen"

TO THE RIGHT, TO THE RIGHT
ALRIGHT, AND THEN YOU TURN
tab
tab
DON'T RAISE YOUR ARM TOO HIGH
YES
OUCH!
waaah!
grab
AND LOWER YOUR HIPS AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

YOU STILL NEED SOME PRAC-TICE
REHEARSE AT HOME PROPERLY AND THEN COME BACK AGAIN, PLEASE
THAT GINJI... DANCING BAD ON PURPOSE!
HOW MOR-TIFYING... TAKING ALL THE CARE OF O-KARU-SAN FOR HIMSELF!
AH... I, TOO, WANT TO GET NEAR HER. AT LEAST CLOSE ENOUGH TO FEEL HER SWEET BREATH
tab
tab
MASTER O-KARU!!!
ALRIGHT EVERYBODY, THAT'S IT FOR TODAY
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!

TODAY IS A REALLY HOT DAY PRACTICE WAS HARD FOR YOU ALL
YOU'RE WELCOME
HOUSEI-SAN, THANK YOU FOR PLAYING THE SHAMISEN
HOUSEI! YOU ARE THE EYE OF EVERYONE'S ENVY NOW!
ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU ARE THE BEST STUDENT
OF EDO'S MOST BEAUTIFUL TEACHER, O-KARU-SAN!
FROM MORNING TILL NIGHT, YOU WOULD PLAY THE SHAMISEN FOR HER,
AND GET CALLED WITH HER ENCHANTING VOICE, "HOUSEI-SAN! HOUSEI-SAN!"
AH! WE WANT TO BECOME HER KITTY-CAT JUST LIKE YOU!
WHO'S A CAT HERE?!
MASTER!
MASTER, YOUR TEACHING STYLE IS REALLY EASY TO FOLLOW!
HE'S A GOOD-LOOKING GUY AND THE HABERDASHER'S SON. HIS NAME IS GINJI.
HE KEEPS CLINGING AROUND OUR MASTER...

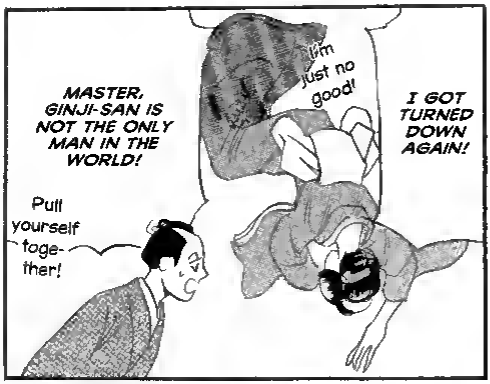
gulp
BUT, STILL... TODAY IS REALLY HOT, ISN'T IT?
SHE HAS SUCH A FAT FACE. ONE WOULD FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE SHE WAS ONCE A GEISHA.
I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO TO THE MASTER OF THE NEIGHBORING TOWN, BUT...
YOU SHOULDN'T BAD-MOUTH YOUR OLD MASTER...
MY, MY
COMPARED TO HER, YOU'RE NOT ONLY BEAUTIFUL, BUT A GREAT DANCER, TOO!
WHOA!?
TONIGHT, I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO GO SOMEWHERE TO AVOID THE SUMMER HEAT.
YOU HAD TO SWEAT A LOT FOR ME...
MASTER...
YOU AND I, TOGE-THER...
HUH?
IF YOU DON'T MIND?

GINJI, YOU IDIOT!!!
IF YOU'RE FINE WITH SOMEONE LIKE ME, THEN
CHING
LET'S MEET AT "MASUYA" IN MINAMI-MACHI, AT 5 O' CLOCK
I'M GLAD!
swish
swish
HOUSEI!
HE SUITS YOU, TOO.. MAYBE
HE'S, RELIABLE I THINK
IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS GINJI-SAN, HOUSEI?
SAY,
lala
lala

I...
...HAVE BAD LUCK WITH MEN
SO MANY MEN HAVE COURTED ME
BUT IN THE END, THEY ALL LEFT ME
BUT THIS TIME, I WON'T FAIL
I'LL BECOME HAPPY
Please do your best
THAT'S RIGHT... I MUSTN'T SURRENDER
I MUSTN'T BE AFRAID
LOOK! THERE ARE FIREFLIES!
THE WIND IS SO REFRESHING
THIS IS THE START OF A NEW LOVE!

IS IT STILL TOO EARLY?
EVER SINCE I FIRST LAID MY EYES ON YOU... I..
GINJI-SAN...
grab
I'M NOT PLAYING WITH FIRE TOGETHER WITH THE LESSONS...
I'M SERIOUS, O-KARU-SAN. I.
I'M SERIOUS...

CAN YOU BRING YOUR MASTER HERE HOME?
SHE DRANK TOO MUCH AND MADE A BIG FUSS AND THE MAN RAN AWAY.
AGAIN ...?
EH?
OH, THERE YOU ARE! THE BEST STUDENT!
WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
chirp chirp
DO
WN
IT FELT SO GOOD..
GINJI-SAN HE SAID HE LOVED ME..
BUT I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING FROM THAT MOMENT ON!
ER..
I got drunk again!
MAS-TER..


I'm just no good!
I GOT TURNED DOWN AGAIN!
MASTER, GINJI-SAN IS NOT THE ONLY MAN IN THE WORLD!
Pull yourself together!

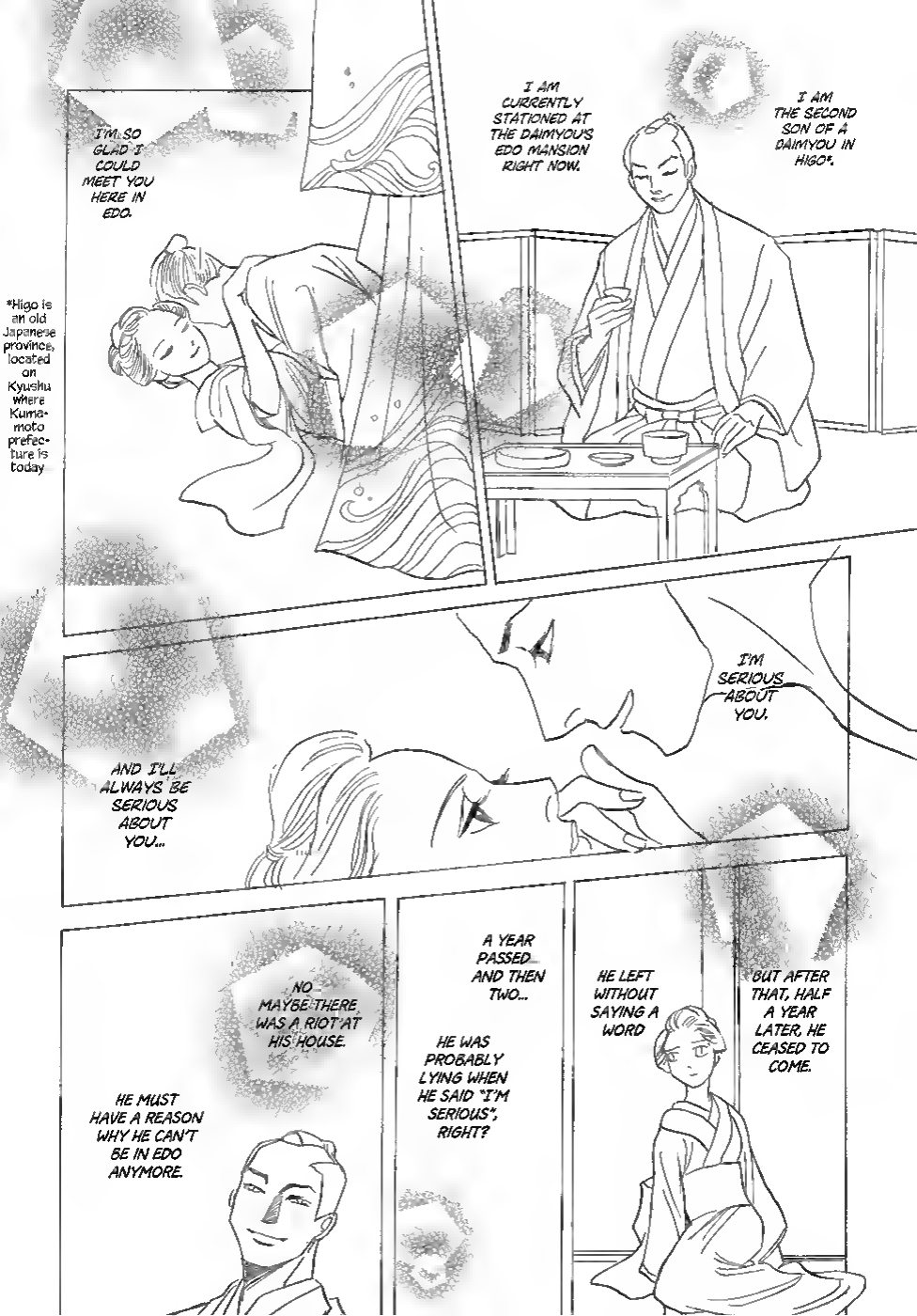
EARLIER... A MESSENGER FROM GINJI-SAN CAME
HE BROUGHT THE MESSAGE THAT GINJI-SAN WISHES TO QUIT PRACTICE

YOU SAID THE SAME THING BEFORE... ABOUT HANZOU-SAN, RYOU-SAN, JIROU- SAN, ROKUBEE-SAN, KOU-SAN...
HOU-SEI!

BUT DON'T YOU SAY THIS EVERY TIME I GET TURNED DOWN?
...KICHIZOU-SAN, AND... ERR... I DON'T REMEMBER...

JUST WHY... AM I SO UNLUCKY WITH MEN..
YOU'RE SO COLD..
MASTER. YOUR STUDENTS WILL ARRIVE SOON
PLEASE STOP CRYING

ALL THE TIME...
I WOULD GET INVITED BY WONDERFUL GENTLEMEN...
AND THEN IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, THEY WOULD VANISH IN FRONT OF ME. JUST LIKE...
TODAY, ALL OF HER...
SEEMS SO SENSUAL...
JUST LIKE THAT MAN
WHAT A WONDERFUL DANCE...
IT'S JUST AS THE RESTAURANT OWNER SAID.
WOMEN FROM EDO ARE REALLY BEAUTIFUL.
KIYOKATA-SAMA...


I'M SO GLAD I COULD MEET YOU HERE IN EDO.
I AM CURRENTLY STATIONED AT THE DAIMYOU'S EDO MANSION RIGHT NOW.
I AM THE SECOND SON OF A DAIMYOU IN HIGO*.
*Higo is an old Japanese province, located on Kyushu where Kumamoto prefecture is today
I'M SERIOUS ABOUT YOU.
AND I'LL ALWAYS BE SERIOUS ABOUT YOU...
NO - MAYBE THERE WAS A RIOT AT HIS HOUSE.
HE MUST HAVE A REASON WHY HE CAN'T BE IN EDO ANYMORE.
A YEAR PASSED... AND THEN TWO...
HE WAS PROBABLY LYING WHEN HE SAID "I'M SERIOUS", RIGHT?
HE LEFT WITHOUT SAYING A WORD
BUT AFTER THAT, HALF A YEAR LATER, HE CEASED TO COME.

HEY!
AFTER ALL.. HE SAID HE WAS "SERIOUS"...
MAS-TER!
drip
I WAS DAY-DREAMING.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT..
THANK YOU, HOUSE!
You can't forget that!!
NO, MASTER...
YOU HAVE TO USE THE FAN HERE..

I ALWAYS CAUSE YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE..
YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD GUY..
KIKU-ZOU-SAN?
MAS-TER.. ERR..
I'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOU..
Ehehe..
IF YOU'RE ALRIGHT WITH IT... WHY DON'T YOU COME SEE A PLAY WITH ME TONIGHT?
ARE YOU REALLY FINE..
WITH ME..?
Uwah!
WHAT AN HONOR! TO GO ON A DATE WITH MY ADMIRED MASTER...
OF COURSE I'D LOVE TO GO!

I'LL BE GOING NOW, HOUSEI.
I DON'T THINK I'LL COME HOME TODAY.
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO. MASTER IS BEAUTIFUL.
MASTER..
ARE YOU FINE WITH JUST ANYBODY?
sigh
WHAT'S UP WITH YOU, THE BEST STUDENT OF THE BEAUTIFUL MASTER?
WATCHING THE HOUSE AGAIN TODAY?
AWOOOO
..
I'M SORRY~ HOUSEI
YES, YES, I UNDER-STAND
SHE GOT DEAD DRUNK AT THE RES-TAURANT AT FUKAGAWA...
I KNEW IT.
pat
pat
HOU-SEI!
HOU-SEI-SAN!
IT'S TERRI-BLE! YOUR MAS-TER...

KIYOKATA-SAMA...
I'VE GOT TO THINK UP OF ANOTHER WAY TO COMFORT HER
WHEN SHE GETS UP IN THE MORNING, SHE'LL PROBABLY CRY AGAIN.
IT SEEMS HE ALREADY WENT HOME
Sasasa/
WHERE IS KIKU-ZOU-SAN..?
KIYOKATA?
AH
IS SHE MAYBE STILL WAITING FOR HIM?
..IS STILL IN LOVE WITH THAT KIYOKATA GUY?
COULD IT BE THE MASTER..
HE'S THAT DAIMYOU'S SON WHO LEFT THE MASTER ALONE WITHOUT A WORD

YOU'RE NOT EVEN PREPARING YOURSELF. DO YOU WANT TO CANCEL PRACTICE TODAY?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MASTER?
tab
tab
EXCUSE ME!
I WAS SENT BY KIKUZOU-SAMA
KIKUZOU-SAMA SAYS HE CANNOT COME TO PRACTICE TODAY—
HERE ARE THE REMAINING FEES FOR THIS MONTH...
KIKU-ZOU-SAN TOO...
WHY ARE THEY ALL AVOID-ING ME? WHY?

AFTER ALL, THESE PEOPLE WHO PRACTICE HERE ARE SONS FROM WEALTHY FAMILIES
THEY STARTED DANCING IN ORDER TO GET CLOSER TO THE BEAUTIFUL MASTER
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
IDIOT!
I... I'VE BEEN LEFT BY A MAN AGAIN!
Hmph.
Idiot?
YOU DIDN'T EVEN REALLY LOVE KIKUZOU
BUT THEY ALL SAID...
THEY WERE SERIOUS ABOUT ME!
BUT... I DON'T HAVE ANY MEMORY OF WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT...
THEIR BEING "SERIOUS" ABOUT YOU... WAS JUST A PRETEXT THEY USE IN ORDER TO WIN WOMEN!
HOUSEI, YOU'RE SO MEAN!
GET OUT!

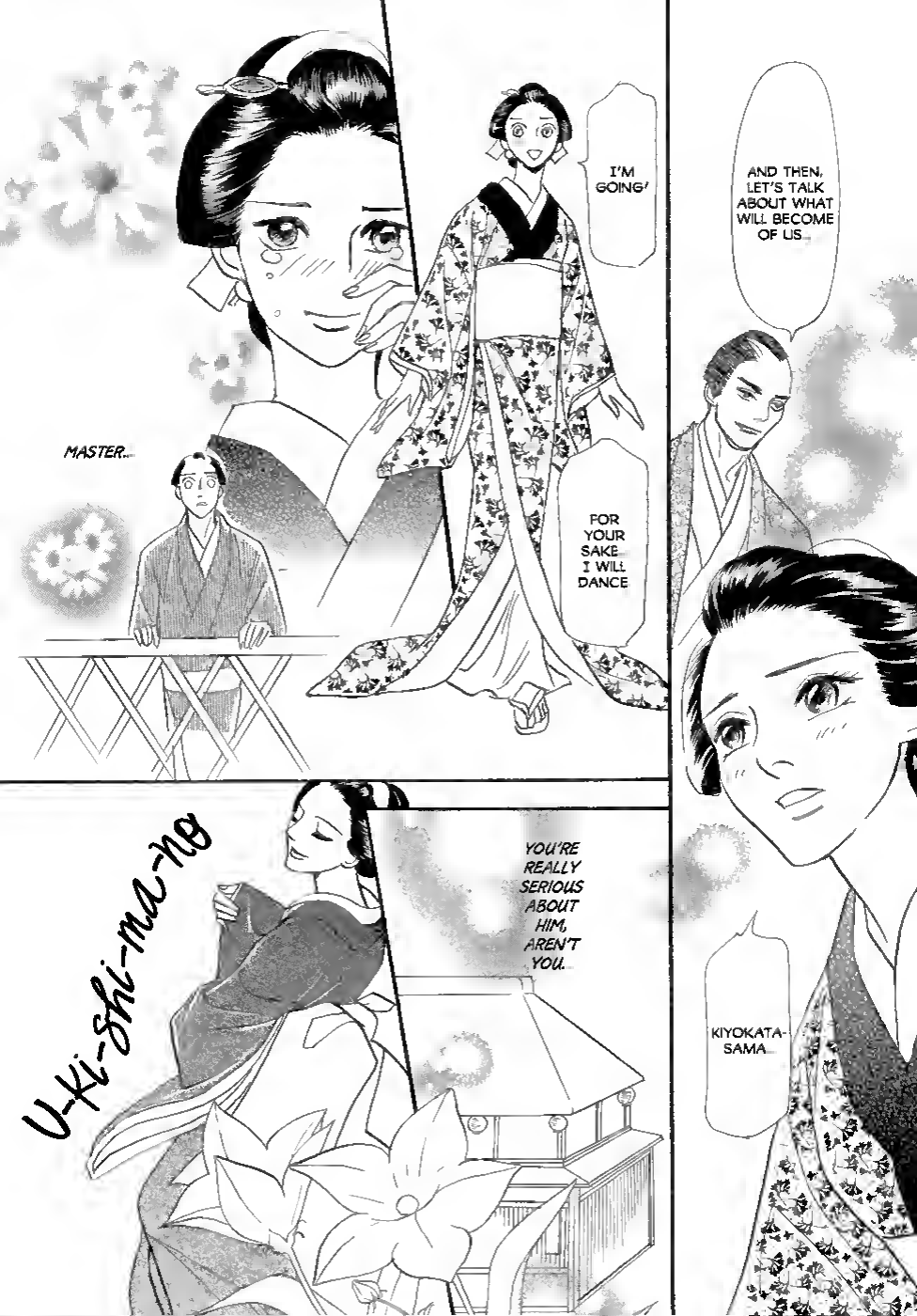
CLATTER
I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE TODAY.
I UNDER-STAND.
write write
HOUSEI!
HOUSEI, ARE YOU REALLY GOING HOME?
TAP TAP
AND YOU DON'T NEED TO PUSH YOURSELF AND PART-NER UP WITH MEN AS WELL
HOUSEI!
Today's practice is cancelled
HE JUST DID AS HE WANTED

AH... I SAID "I'M SERIOUS ABOUT YOU, O-KARU-SAN, I LOVE YOU"..
I SAID "I'M NOT PLAYING AROUND, I'M SERIOUS"...
PLEASE LET ME ASK YOU SOME-THING!
ABOUT HOW THINGS WENT BACK THEN...
AH... HOUSEI-SAN
SORRY FOR STOPPING YOU SO SUDDENLY
MY REASON? THAT IS...
YOU'RE KIDDING ME.
ONE MORE!
gulp
JUST WHEN I SAID "I'M SERIOUS"..
YOU'LL DISAPPEAR TOO, ANYWAY!

WELL... IF WHAT HAPPENED ACTUALLY WENT AS PLANNED,
I COULD HAVE DONE "THIS" WITH THE SO-CALLED BEAUTIFUL O-KARE-SAN...
IF THIS HAD WENT WELL?
AREN'T YOU THE SAME, TOO?
YOU MAY BE HER BEST STUDENT, BUT ISN'T O-KARU-SAN'S BODY YOUR ACTUAL GOAL?
IT'S THE TALK OF THE TOWN.
HOUSEI HAS SUCH A TERRIBLE CRUSH ON O-KARU-SAN...
BUT SHE DOESN'T NOTICE HIM AT ALL.
THAT'S NOT IT!
WHOA, WHOA! STOP THAT, THAT'S DANGER-OUS!
I'M HER STU-DENT...
STOP KIDDING YOUR-SELF
YOU LIKE O-KARU-SAN... AS A WOMAN

EXCUSE ME!
I GUESS YOU'RE THERE, O-KARU
IT'S ME
KIYOKATA-SAMA?
KIYOKATA-SAMA!!!

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE ABLE TO SEE YOU AGAIN...
AH... I'M REALLY SORRY.
THIS.. IS LIKE A DREAM... I NEVER THOUGHT...
O-KARU! I WANTED TO MEET YOU!
O-KARU..
I HAVE SOME FRIENDS WHO WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU DANCE.
TONIGHT, CAN YOU DANCE AT THE RESTAURANT OF A FRIEND OF MINE?
I WAS SO BUSY THAT I WASN'T ABLE TO FIND THE TIME TO WRITE YOU A LETTER.
I JUST HAD TO RETURN HOME BECAUSE OF A SUDDEN BUSINESS
I'M ALREADY SATISFIED WITH JUST BEING ABLE TO SEE YOUR FACE LIKE THIS.
IT'S FINE, I.
smile


AND THEN, LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT WILL BECOME OF US...
KIYOKATA-SAMA...
I'M GOING!
FOR YOUR SAKE... I WILL DANCE
MASTER...
YOU'RE REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT HIM, AREN'T YOU...
U-ki-shi-ma-ru

AS EXPECTED, SHE'S DIFFERENT FROM COUNTRYSIDE WOMEN.
SO THIS IS THE BEAUTIFUL MASTER KNOWN ALL AROUND EDO?
OH, THIS IS GREAT, REALLY GREAT!
KIYOKATA IS A REALLY GOOD PLAYER.
IT WAS SMART OF HIM TO MAKE THIS WOMAN HIS WHILE BEING IN EDO
UNBEARABLE—
O-KARU, COME HERE

O-KARU
I'M THINKING OF BUILDING A LARGE HOUSE FOR YOU.
KIYO-KATA-SAMA..
I'LL PROVIDE FOR YOUR LIVING AND DRESS YOU UP BEAUTIFULLY— AS FAR AS I CAN AFFORD, THAT IS
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN THINK-ING OF ME, HAVEN'T YOU—
THAT ALONE MAKES ME HAPPY
I WON'T RESTRICT YOU AT ALL...
BUT IN RETURN—

WHEN THE SONS OF THESE DAIMYOU FAMILIES COME TO EDO
THEY'LL INVITE YOU TO THEIR MANSIONS, AND WANT YOU TO TAKE CARE OF THEM
CARE...?
EDO'S PROSTITUTES REALLY HAVE A LOT OF PRIDE
THEY TREAT US LIKE COUNTRY PEOPLE AND WON'T SLEEP WITH US!
THE PROSTI-TUTES DON'T LIKE ME AND WON'T LET ME DO!
I WENT TO YOSHIWARA SO MANY TIMES, BUT EVEN IF I GIVE THEM PRESENTS, THEY PUSH ME AWAY!
THE BROTHELS IN EDO TAKE MONEY!
O-KARU, YOU'RE A BEAUTY, AND
YOU ARE EASY TO KEEP COMPANY WITH...
JUST WHY CAN'T WE SLEEP WITH EDO WOMEN?!
BANG
WE, DAIMYOU-PEOPLE...

THESE MEN WILL BE THERE TO COMFORT YOU, SO..
WHEN I'M NOT THERE AND YOU'RE LONELY,
SHE'S MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE COURTE-SAN WHO LET ME DOWN A WHILE AGO
O-KARU-SAN, WE WILL TREAT YOU WITH AFFECTION
I'M ALWAYS SERIOUS.
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS, ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I'M SERIOUS..
I'M SERIOUS..
ME FIRST!
NO, ME!
COME HERE
OKAY
YOU ARE A GOOD WO-MAN
I WON'T FORGIVE YOU GUYS!
DESPITE BEING SAMURAIS, YOU ALL ARE SO DIRTY!
MAS-TER!

WHAT'S WITH YOU?
KIYO-KATA!
YOUR BEING SERIOUS IS SO FILTHY!
A MAN BEING SERIOUS
IS SOME-THING MUCH MORE PURE AND BEAU-TIFUL!
O-KARU-SAN IS... AN IMPORTANT PERSON TO ME!

WE WILL TURN YOU INTO CHOPPED FISH!
ALL RIGHT!
HAVEN'T YOU GOT SOME NERVE?
HEY
O-KARU-SAN, PLEASE RUN AWAY!
I'LL BE FINE!
I'M GIVING UP ON THIS IDIOTIC DAIMYOU!
WAAAAAAH!
HOUSEI... YOU BEING SERIOUS OPENED MY EYES...

OH, HOUSE! DID YOUR MASTER GET DRUNK AGAIN?
NO, I'M JUST BEING SPOILED!
THOSE GUYS, WHEN THEY SAID THEY WERE "SERIOUS"
THEY WERE ACTUALLY BEING SHALLOW AND SELFISH.
THIS TIME I'M SERIOUS ABOUT YOU, HOUSE!
THAT'S WHY I WAS UNSURE AND STARTED TO RAGE...
Being defeated by a woman...
This is so embarrassing, I can't even say it out loud...
Edo Love Dance END

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Brought to you by:
ISKULTRIP SCANS
http://iskultripmoutaye.net

DOLL
Based on the Ballet
"Nutcracker"

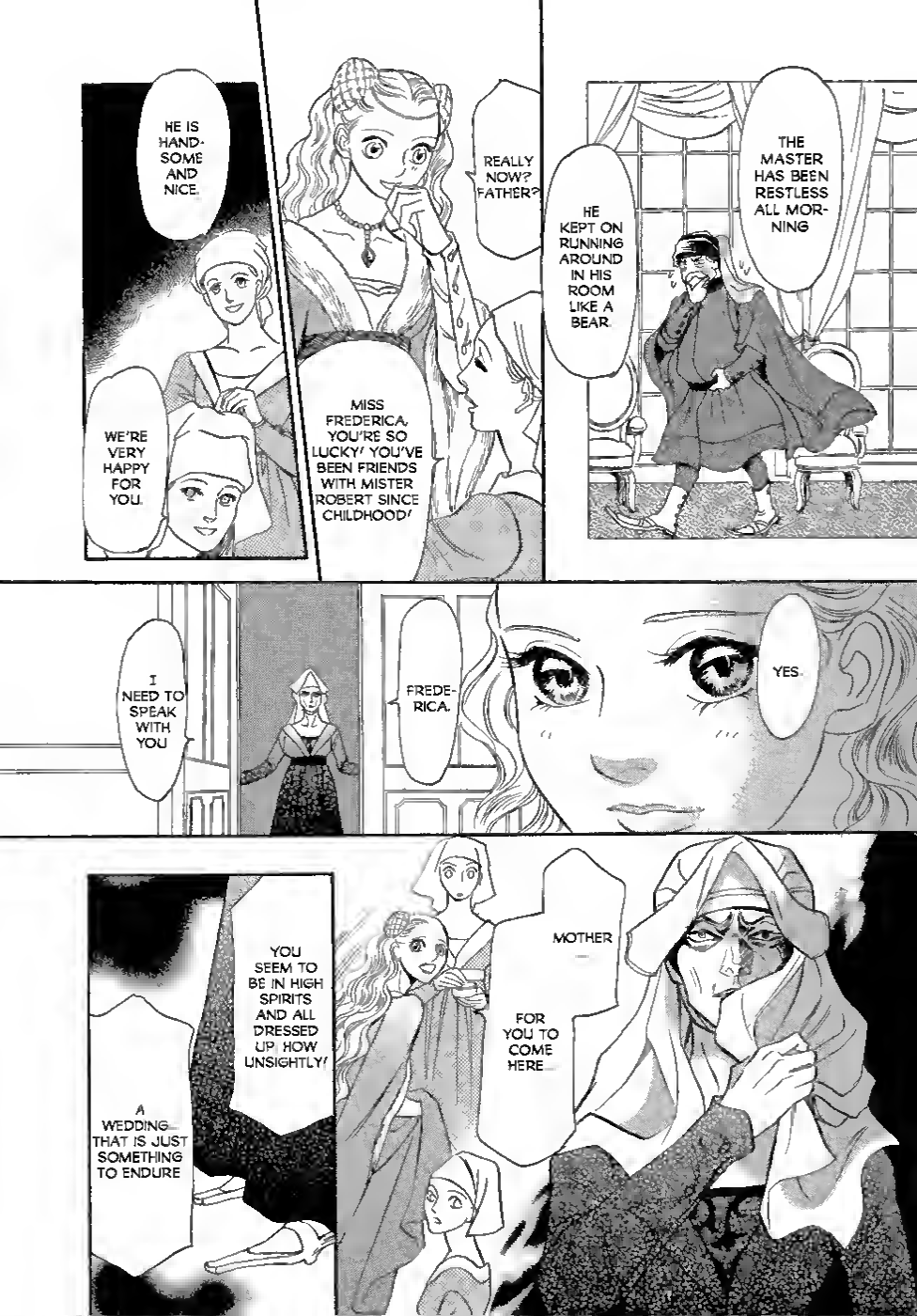
HEY!
HOW DETES-TABLE... THIS SCARES ME!
DANG
HEY!
DANG
DANG
*A GERMAN TYPE OF CAKE
huff
huff
MADAME— THE STOL-LEN* DOUGH IS READY NOW.

IT'S NOT ENOUGH YET... IT'S STILL NOT DAMN ENOUGH!
COMPARED TO MY MISFORTUNE, IT'S NOT ENOUGH!
MORE NUTS...
BRING ME DRIED FRUITS!
HANNA! BRING ME MORE... MORE FLOUR!
MADAME HILDA, PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT
THIS SEASON IN WHICH EVERYBODY CELEBRATES THE BIRTH OF GOD'S CHILD
IS THE SEASON THAT I FEAR THE MOST

BANG
IF ONLY SHE WASN'T BORN A WOMAN!
IF ONLY SHE WASN'T ALIVE!
BANG
IF ONLY I DIDN'T BEAR THAT CHILD!
AND THEN..
MY MOTHER WHO USUALLY SILENTLY SHUTS HERSELF IN HER CHAMBER..
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, SHE WILL RAISE A FRIGHTENING VOICE..
GYAAAAAAAAAA
MOTHER..
COMES OUT DURING THIS SEASON TO PREPARE CANDIES FOR CHRISTMAS. SHE'LL GO DOWNSTAIRS...
YOU WENT TO SEE WHAT MADAME WAS DOING, WEREN'T YOU?
DID YOU GO DOWN-STAIRS AGAIN?
MISS FREDE-RICA!
SHOCK

IF ONLY I WAS NEVER BORN! EVERY-THING WOULD HAVE TURNED OUT FINE!
OH, YOU DEAR CHILD... YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THIS AGAIN...
I THINK...
MOTHER HATES ME
YOU KNOW...
YOU MUSTN'T TELL THIS TO ANY-ONE
IT'S UNTHINKABLE FOR A NOBLE-WOMAN TO MAKE CON-FECTIONERY WITH HER OWN TWO HANDS..
WHEN MADAME WAS YOUNG...
HER ENGAGE-MENT WITH THE MAN SHE TRULY LOVED WAS CALLED OFF
HER HEART STILL IN GRIEF, SHE MARRIED YOUR FATHER, WHO WAS 20 YEARS HER SENIOR
EVER SINCE THEN, SHE HAS CHANGED COM-PLETELY..

DON'T BLAME YOURSELF.
MADAME IS JUST HAVING A HARD TIME.
MY POOR MOTHER
I WANT TO REMOVE HER SADNESS..
PUFF
LIGHT THE LAMPS IN THE RESIDENCES SO THAT GOD'S LIGHT WILL REACH EVERY CORNER.
SOMEHOW, IT FEELS AS IF CHRISTMAS IS SPECIAL THIS YEAR!
MISS FREDERICA'S WEDDING HAS BEEN DECIDED, THAT'S WHY!
HOW BEAUTIFUL!
MANY GUESTS WILL COME TO THE FESTIVITIES TONIGHT


THE MASTER HAS BEEN RESTLESS ALL MORNING
HE KEPT ON RUNNING AROUND IN HIS ROOM LIKE A BEAR.
REALLY NOW? FATHER?
MISS FREDERICA, YOU'RE SO LUCKY! YOU'VE BEEN FRIENDS WITH MISTER ROBERT SINCE CHILDHOOD!
HE IS HANDSOME AND NICE.
WE'RE VERY HAPPY FOR YOU.
YES.
FREDERICA.
I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU
MOTHER...
FOR YOU TO COME HERE...
YOU SEEM TO BE IN HIGH SPIRITS AND ALL DRESSED UP. HOW UNSIGHTLY!
A WEDDING... THAT IS JUST SOMETHING TO ENDURE

I... WAS TAKEN IN AS A SECOND WIFE.
AND ONLY BORE A SINGLE GIRL.
I WAS SCOLDED BY MY RELATIVES AND CONSEQUENTLY IGNORED...
THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING FOR ME TO BE HAPPY ABOUT.
I ASK YOU, FREDERICA...
BEING BORN AS A WOMAN ITSELF
IS A CURSE!
A WEDDING IS ONLY USED AS A PRETEXT TO TAKE OVER MONEY AND LAND!
ABSOLUTELY DON'T THINK YOU COULD BECOME HAPPY!

SHE'S SURELY JUST JEALOUS OF MISS FREDERICA'S LUCK
JUST HOW SINISTER IS THIS MADAME!
JUST WHEN I THOUGHT HOW RARE IT WAS FOR HER TO COME OUT OF HER ROOM!
DASH
SHE IS NOT HUMAN. SHE IS WORSE THAN A DOG!
MOTHER... CAME TO MY ROOM
SHE LOOKED AT ME WITH A FACE FULL OF DESPISE, BUT...
SHE TALKED TO ME...
CON-GRATU-LATIONS.
WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR HEART-FELT CON-GRATULA-TIONS TO MISS FRE-DERICA.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INVITING US
SHE DIDN'T FORGET THAT I EXIST...

SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE EVEN 20 YEARS YOUNGER THAN PRINCE MARCUS,
BUT SHE LOOKS LIKE AN OLD WOMAN NOW...
THAT'S WHY SHE WAS TAKEN IN AS THE SECOND WIFE TO THIS CASTLE
IT WAS A PROMISE TO WRITE OFF HER PARENTS' DEBTS..
WELL... SHE'S A QUITE GLOOMY WOMAN...
THE WIFE OF THE HOUSE IS SHOWING HERSELF.
OH, LOOK! HOW RARE
That's right!
THIS CASTLE'S CHRISTMAS CANDIES ARE VERY WELL-KNOWN
OH, MY! WHAT WONDERFUL CONFECTIONERY!
THEY MUST HAVE A SERVANT WITH STRONG ARMS... I'M JEALOUS.
EVERYBODY IS TALKING ABOUT MY MOTHER..
SUCH SPITEFUL WORDS, SO SARCASTIC AND MEAN.

THAT'S... WHAT MY MOTHER MADE!
THE SWEETS MY MOTHER MADE...
THEY'RE EATING THEM HAPPILY.
EH?
BARON DROSSEL-MEIER HAS ARRIVED.
BUT IT'S SO DELI-CIOUS!
Ho ho!
You don't need to eat these so hastily
OH, IT'S FINE. THEY WILL LET US TAKE MANY OF THESE HOME
ISN'T THAT THE ALCHE-MIST?
HE'S A VERY DEAR FRIEND OF THE KING
MY DEAR FRIEND!
THANK YOU FOR COMING!

PRINCE MARCUS,
TO BE INVITED BY MY DEAR FRIEND ON THIS WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS DAY
IS A TRULY GREAT HONOR
YOUR BEAUTIFULLY GROWN DAUGHTER, MISS FREDERICA,
AND ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE ASSEMBLED HERE,
I'VE BROUGHT WONDERFUL GIFTS FOR YOU
HERE ARE LADY DOLLS THAT COME FROM ROME,
A SINGING BIRD EVEN THOUGH NO BLOOD RUNS IN ITS VEINS,
A WOODEN HORSE THAT CAN RUN,
A LAUGHING DOG.

AS EXPECTED OF YOU, DROSSELMEIER!
SCIENTIFIC TRICKS NOBODY HAS YET SEEN.
TODAY'S PROTAGONIST IS MISS FREDERICA. PLEASE CHOOSE WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
WITH THESE WHITE HANDS OF YOURS...
WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT ARE YOU HESITATING FOR?
YOU GODDESS WHO'S SO LUCKY TO FIND A HUSBAND YOU DEEPLY LOVE.
GO AHEAD, MISS FREDERICA!
THESE ARE RARE ALCHEMIST GIFTS.
STARE
YOU CAN NEVER HAVE ENOUGH LUCK.
MOTHER IS LOOKING AT ME...
WELL THEN, TAKE ONE.

I... WAS TAKEN IN AS A SECOND WIFE.
THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING FOR ME TO BE HAPPY ABOUT.
I MUSN'T APPEAR TO BE TOO HAPPY.
OR ELSE MOTHER WILL THINK OF ME AS AN UNSIGHTLY DAUGHTER WHO IS GREEDY FOR LUCK.
GO AHEAD, HELP YOURSELVES I WILL JUST TAKE WHATEVER IS LEFT
PLEASE TAKE WHATEVER YOU LIKE
Waaa
grip
WHAT A SPITEFUL DAUGHTER!
THIS WAS... AN INSINUATION TOWARDS ME...
OH, WHAT A SPITEFUL DAUGHTER!
TO PUT UP SUCH AN ACT IN FRONT OF HER MISERABLE MOTHER...
MOTHER...

OH, MY THAT'S NOT GOOD A YOUNG PERSON LIKE YOU WHO HAS SO MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN THE FUTURE.
TO BE SHOWN JUDGEMENT OF THAT AN OLD WOMAN...
IT'S JUST AS MOTHER SAYS..
I'M AN EMBARRASS-MENT...
BUT WHAT ELSE COULD HAVE I SAID?
WHAT A SPITEFUL DAUGHTER I AM...
HOW CAN I SET MOTHER AT EASE?
MARCUS, DON'T OVERWORK YOURSELF
BUT BEFORE THAT..
WITH THAT GLOOMY WIFE OF YOURS, THE PARTY'S ATMOSPHERE HAS BEEN SPOILED
I WILL LEAVE THE CASTLE IN SPRING
FATHER... AND WHO IS THIS?
FRANZ, YOU DO KNOW THAT SHE HAS BECOME LIKE THAT BECAUSE OF YOU

YES, YES I KNOW. I CALLED OFF THE ENGAGEMENT AND GAVE IT TO YOU.
WHEN YOU FOUND OUT THAT HILDA'S FAMILY HAD NO PROPERTIES...
WELL, THAT CAN'T BE HELPED, CAN IT? SHE WAS MADLY IN LOVE WITH ME.
HILDA STILL BELIEVES UNTIL NOW THAT I BROKE OFF YOUR ENGAGEMENT BY FORCE.
HILDA'S FAMILY WAS ABLE TO PAY OFF THEIR DEBTS,
AND I WAS ABLE TO MARRY A RICH GIRL!
YOU SCORED A GIRL, TWENTY YEARS YOUNGER EVEN, AS YOUR SECOND WIFE—
BUT, I SEE YOU'VE BEEN FINE WITH IT?
THIS INSISTENT KIND OF WOMAN DOESN'T BREAK UP WITH YOU.
YOU NEED TO ADMIT,
ALL MONEY PROBLEMS WERE SOLVED WITH THESE MARRIAGES.

SO THE REASON SHE MAKES CONFECTIONERY WITH HER OWN HANDS..
IS BECAUSE SHE LONGS FOR THIS MAN?
AND NOW THEY ARE THE SPECIALTY OF THIS CASTLE
HA HA HA!
BY THIS MAN?
AND THEN THESE FRIGGING SWEET CANDIES..
AFTER I PRAISED THEM ONCE, SHE STARTED MAKING THEM EVERY YEAR UNTIL WE BROKE UP
MOTHER HAS BEEN... BETRAYED!
AH!
MISS FREDERICA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING OVER THERE?
IT'S GREAT! IT'S SO FUN!
COME TO THE HALL!

MY MODEST FREDE-RICA...
ALLOW ME TO PRESENT YOU THESE MECHANICAL DOLLS
HOW WONDER-FUL, DROSSEL-MEIER!
TRULY A GREAT GIFT!
TH... THESE ARE FOR ME?
SUCH A...
CHRISTMAS IS...
ALSO THE SHORTEST DAY OF THE YEAR, THE WINTER SOLSTICE.

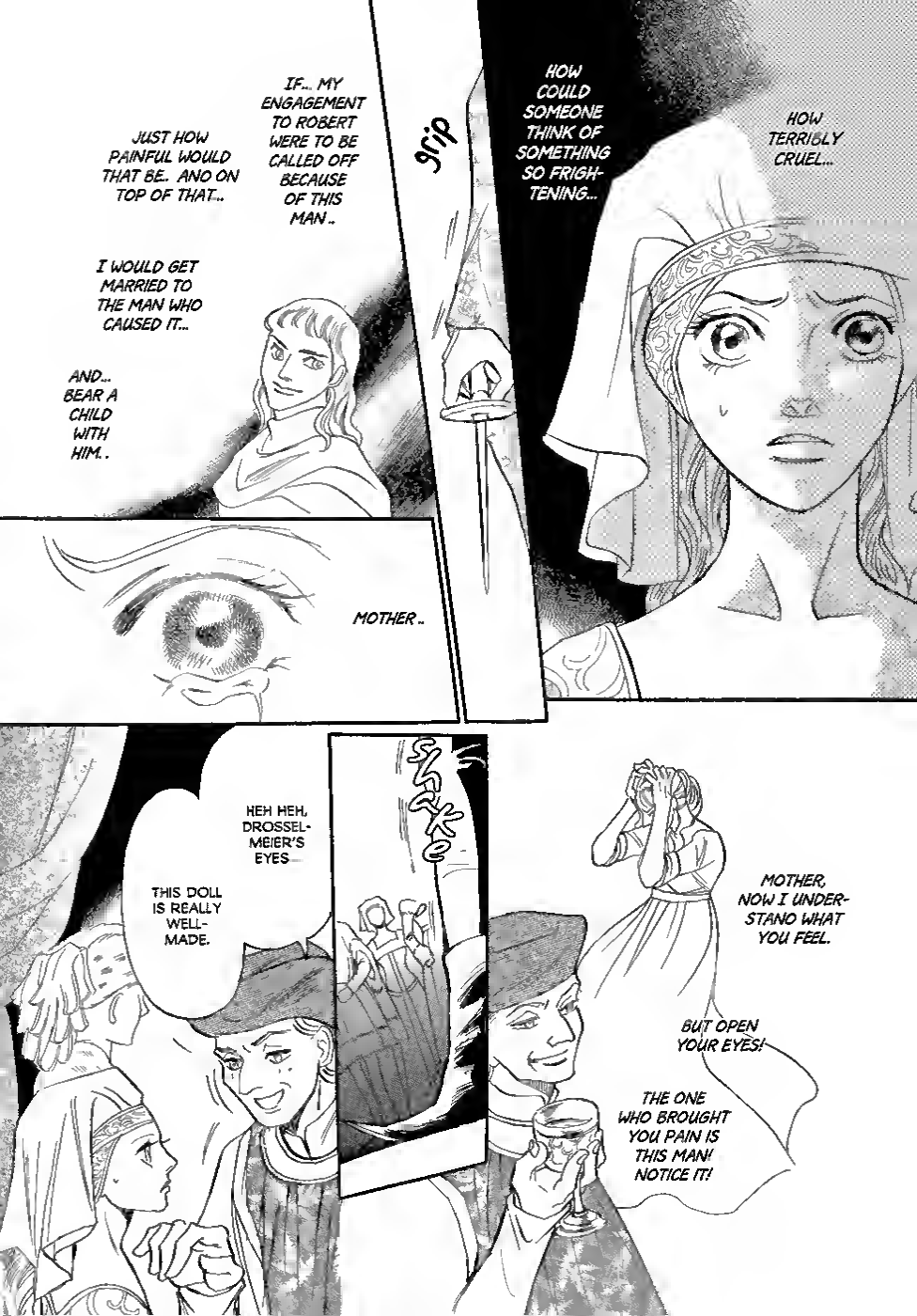
THESE ARE... AMBER ...?
SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, IT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED A HOLY DAY TO CHASE AWAY THE EVIL THAT RESIDES IN OUR HEARTS AND FACE THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SPRING
TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE EYES OF THESE DOLLS.
FRANZ!
IT MOVED!
creak
IT IS SAID THAT AMBER HAS THE POWER TO SEAL AWAY EVIL
BUT... I... I'M SO UGLY RIGHT NOW...!
YOU CAME ...?
COME, DOLLS.
MOVE AROUND, AND IF THERE'S ANY EVIL THAT RESIDES IN FREDERICA, TAKE IT AWAY WITH THOSE EYES OF YOURS

Now then!
RUN! RUN AS YOU CAN!
WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE PEOPLE WHOSE EYES THE DOLLS LOOKED INTO?
DOES EVIL CLOUD YOUR JUDGEMENT? WELL THEN, PLACE YOUR HAND ON YOUR CHEST!

HOW WAS IT? DID YOU LIKE IT?
MO-THER!!
DON'T LOOK AT ME!
RATTLE
I KNOW... WHERE THE EVIL RESIDES IN...
AH..
STOP... STOP IT!
DROSSEL-MEIER... PLEASE... HELP MY MOTHER!
NOW THAT I LOOK AT YOU, YOU ALSO HAVE AMBER EYES.
FREDERICA, IF YOU'VE FOUND THE EVIL,
THEN YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SEAL IT AWAY AS WELL.

WITH YOUR PASSIONATE HEART,
YOU CAN MELT YOUR MOTHER'S HEART OF ICE.
MYSTERIOUS POWERS WORK ON CHRISTMAS.
ME..?
DON'T BLAME YOURSELF..
FRANZ...
YOU DRANK TOO MUCH
IN A BIT
I'LL DRINK THE REMAINING ALCOHOL HERE. MAYBE FREDERICA WILL DROP BY TO MAKE LOVE!
WHAT A TASTELESS JOKE.
YOU SHOULD RETURN TO THE GUEST ROOM AND GO TO SLEEP.
DON'T TELL ME SHE'S INTO ME!
STOP BEING SUCH A KILLJOY! YOUR GIRL, FREDERICA..
SHE TOLD ME I SHOULD STAY HERE AT ANY COST! HE HE HE!

HMPH.
I'LL BE GOING AHEAD THEN.
HEH HEH
I SEE
YES... I COULD USE THAT.
I WILL VIOLATE FREDERICA, WHICH WILL CAUSE THE ENGAGEMENT TO BE CALLED OFF...
AND THEN I'LL BREAK UP WITH MY CURRENT WIFE...
WITH THAT, THIS CASTLE AND THIS LAND,
EVERYTHING THAT MARCUS OWNS... WILL BE MINE!
HEH HEH
FREDERICA, YOU'RE STILL PURE AND YOUR BODY IS STILL THAT OF A CHILD
I'M HERE...
ALRIGHT, LET'S PLAY DOLL
HOW CRUEL.


HOW TERRIBLY CRUEL...
HOW COULD SOMEONE THINK OF SOMETHING SO FRIGHTENING...
grip
IF... MY ENGAGEMENT TO ROBERT WERE TO BE CALLED OFF BECAUSE OF THIS MAN..
JUST HOW PAINFUL WOULD THAT BE.. AND ON TOP OF THAT...
I WOULD GET MARRIED TO THE MAN WHO CAUSED IT...
AND... BEAR A CHILD WITH HIM..
MOTHER..
MOTHER, NOW I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU FEEL.
BUT OPEN YOUR EYES!
THE ONE WHO BROUGHT YOU PAIN IS THIS MAN! NOTICE IT!
SNATCH
HEH HEH, DROSSELMEIER'S EYES—
THIS DOLL IS REALLY WELL-MADE.

LET'S SEE WHAT'S INSIDE THESE CLOTHES
...!!!
THAT HURTS
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE
FREDERICA
NO!
WHA!
YOU WERE IMITATING A DOLL?
YOU WORKED THIS OUT VERY WELL COME HERE
SOMEONE LIKE YOU
I'LL CUT YOU INTO FINE PIECES
A FRUIT KNIFE?
HOW BRAVE OF YOU
BE QUIET!

カタカタ!!
LOOM
UGH...
BANG
BANG
WAIT!
WHAT THE HECK?

TO BE SEEN BY THIS MAN..
MA-DAME..
YOU SAW FRANZ EARLIER, DIDN'T YOU?
IT MUST HAVE BEEN NICE..
WITH THIS CLUMSY APPEAR-ANCE OF MINE..
huff
STOP IT! AREN'T YOU ASHAMED?
DON'T TALK SO STIFF! I'LL DO EVERY-THING NECES-SARY TO GET WHAT I WANT!
BLAM
I'LL MAKE UP AS MANY EXCUSES AS POSSI-BLE...
FATHER WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU!
kyaaaaa

IT WAS EASY.
I BROKE OFF MY ENGAGE-MENT TO YOUR MOTHER.
I MAY BE A NOBLEMAN BUT I WAS PRETTY POOR BACK THEN.
THANKS TO YOU, MY MO-THER AND I ARE...
JUST HOW MUCH LONGER ARE WE GOING TO SUFFER...
DON'T MOVE!
YOU COWARD! DON'T TOUCH ME!
I SHED CROCO-DILE TEARS WHEN WE PARTED,
AND SHE BE-LIEVED ME UNTIL THE VERY LAST SECOND.
WH...
I'LL GIVE YOU PUNISH-MENT!
I WON'T FORGIVE YOU!

THE DOLLS ARE...
WAH!
click
click
WHOA!
WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE YOU DOING TO MY DAUGHTER...?!
<BONK>
<THUD>

M... MOTHER ...
huff
click
click
TAKE THIS!
AND THAT!
rattle
PLEASE DESTROY AMBER... THE EVIL EYES... IN ME
MO-THER!

MYSTERIOUS POWERS WORK ON CHRISTMAS .
PLEASE FORGIVE ME..
I EVEN HATED YOUR FATHER...
I WAS TAKEN IN ONLY BY MY PAIN
I COULDN'T FIND IT IN MY HEART TO LOVE YOU.
WHAT A DUMB MOTHER I AM...
this stinking baron.
Well, well, what should we do about him..
ALRIGHT! PUT UP THE DECORATION! OUR "FRANZ THE IDIOTIC BARON" CAKE!
CRASH

LET'S HAVE THE CROWS EAT IT!
THEY ARE BAKED JUST ABOUT RIGHT!
WELL, IT'S DOUGH THROWN AT THE FACE OF AN IDIOT!

DOLL - The End

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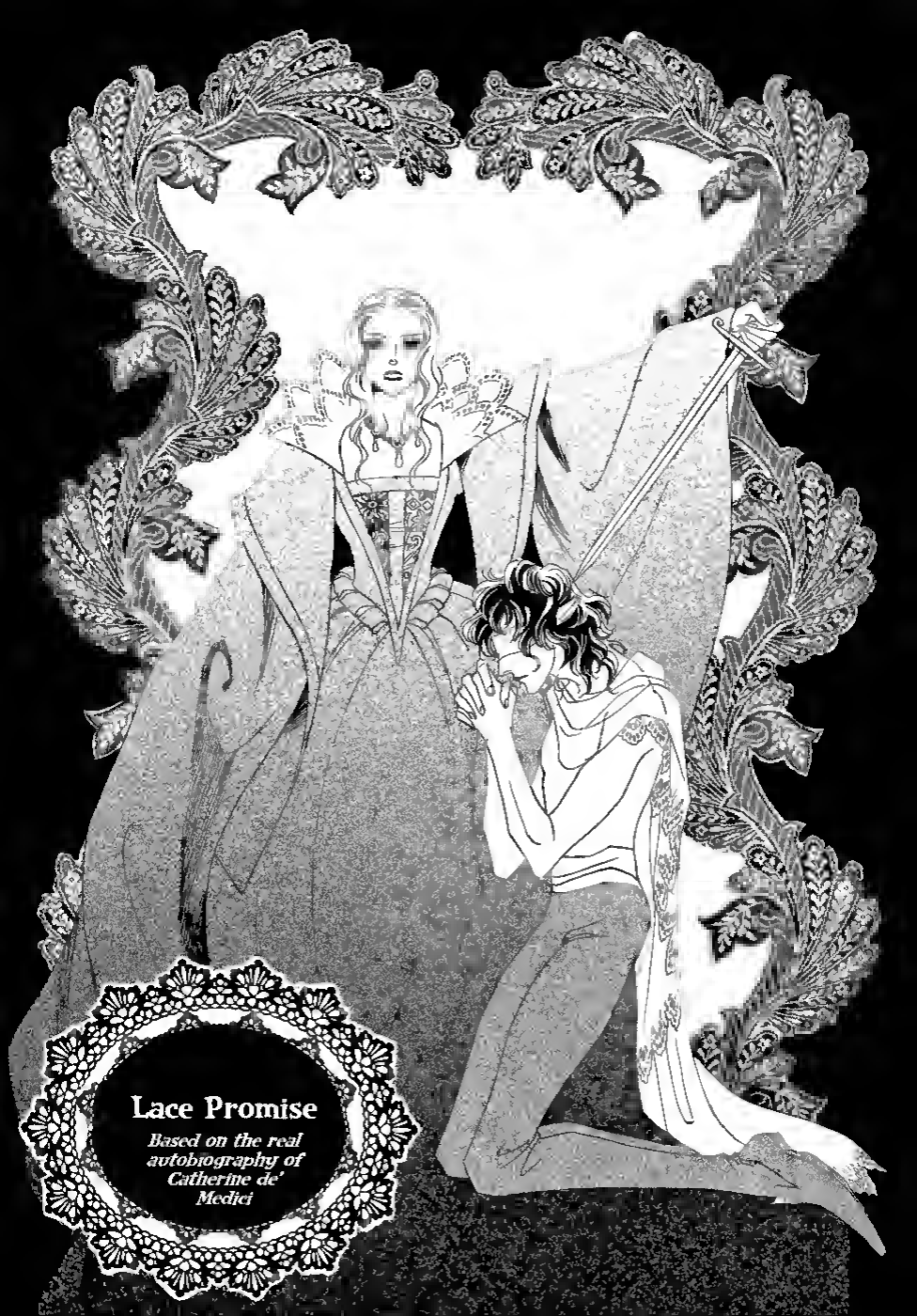
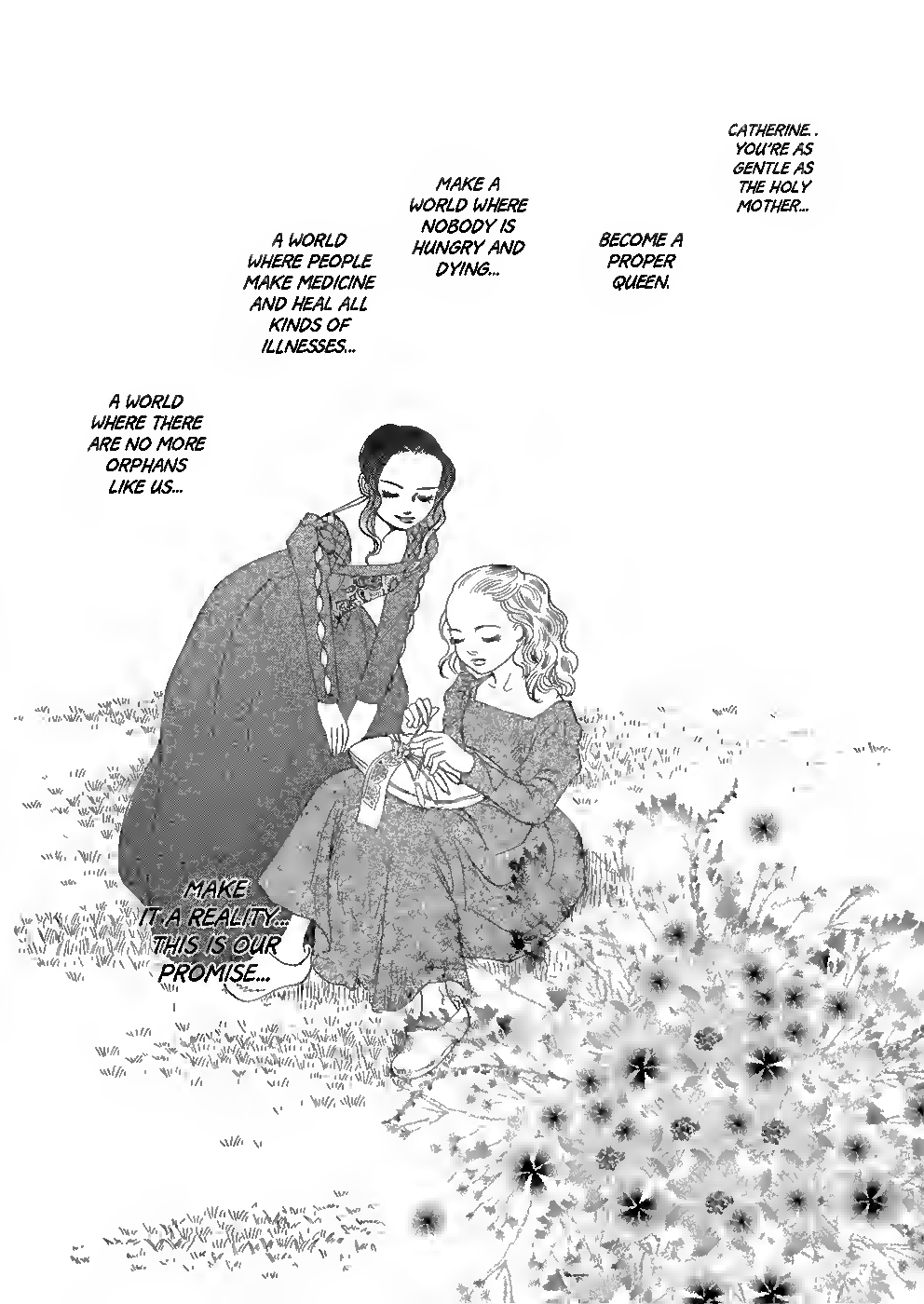
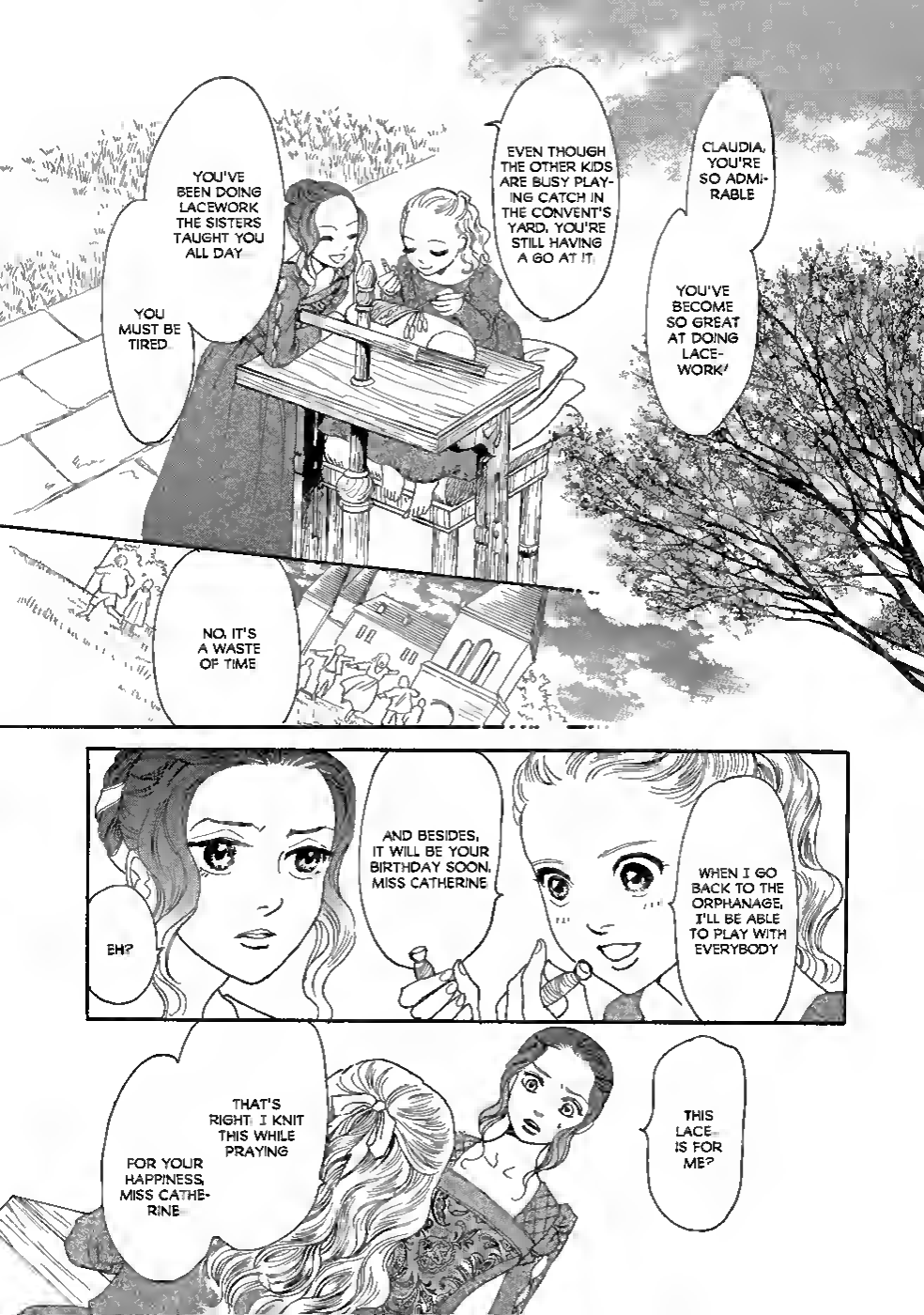

Lace Promise
Based on the real autobiography of Catherine de' Medici


CATHERINE. YOU'RE AS GENTLE AS THE HOLY MOTHER...
BECOME A PROPER QUEEN.
MAKE A WORLD WHERE NOBODY IS HUNGRY AND DYING...
A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE MAKE MEDICINE AND HEAL ALL KINDS OF ILLNESSES...
A WORLD WHERE THERE ARE NO MORE ORPHANS LIKE US...
MAKE IT A REALITY... THIS IS OUR PROMISE...


CLAUDIA, YOU'RE SO ADMIRABLE
YOU'VE BECOME SO GREAT AT DOING LACEWORK!
EVEN THOUGH THE OTHER KIDS ARE BUSY PLAYING CATCH IN THE CONVENT'S YARD, YOU'RE STILL HAVING A GO AT IT
YOU'VE BEEN DOING LACEWORK THE SISTERS TAUGHT YOU ALL DAY
YOU MUST BE TIRED
NO, IT'S A WASTE OF TIME
WHEN I GO BACK TO THE ORPHANAGE, I'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY WITH EVERYBODY
AND BESIDES, IT WILL BE YOUR BIRTHDAY SOON, MISS CATHERINE
EH?
THIS LACE IS FOR ME?
THAT'S RIGHT. I KNIT THIS WHILE PRAYING
FOR YOUR HAPPINESS, MISS CATHERINE

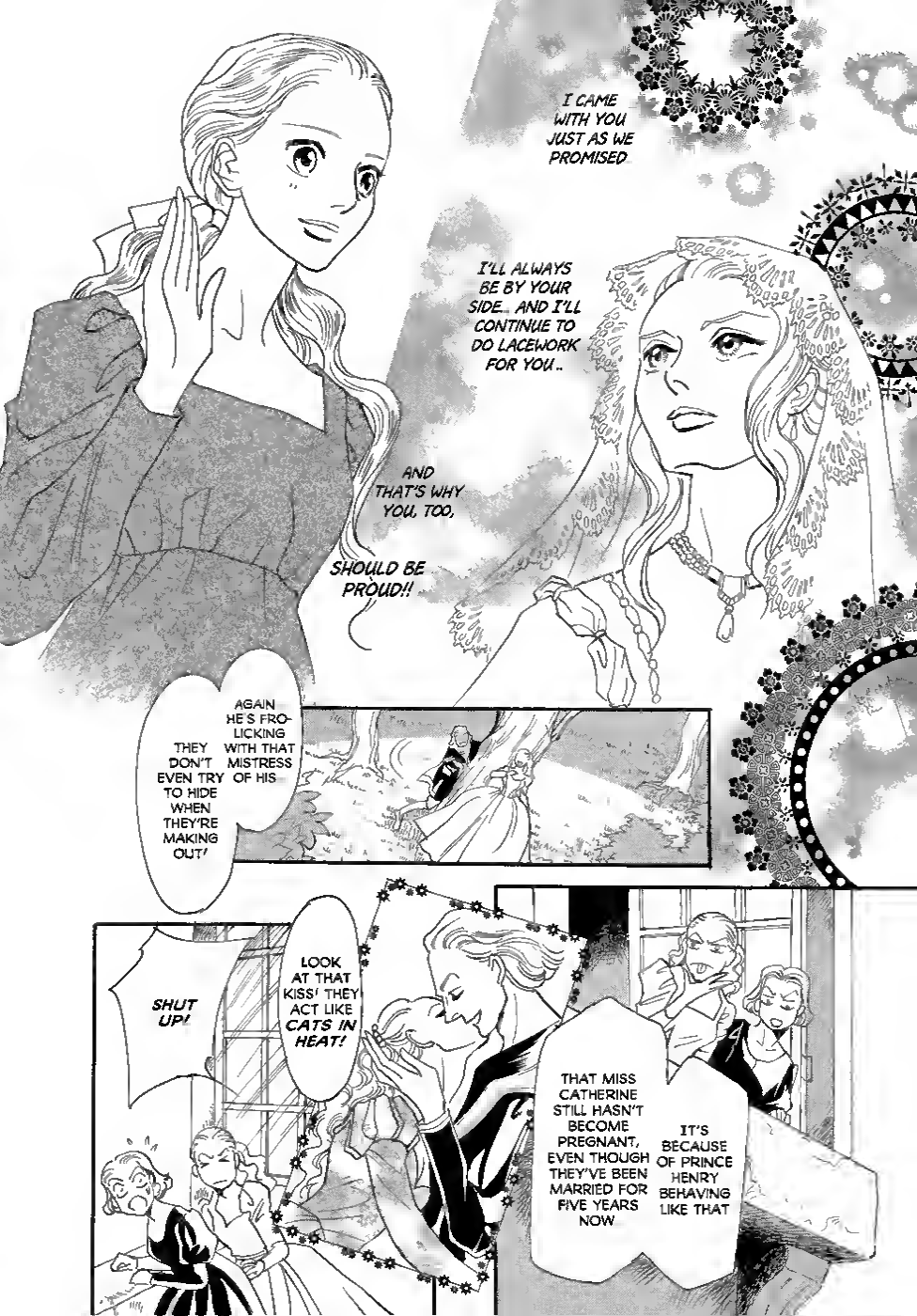
I LOVE YOU, CLAUDIA.
YOU ARE MY ONLY REAL FRIEND.
DON'T EVER... CALL ME "MISS" CATHERINE AGAIN..
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
CL... CLAUDIA!
IS IT BAD FOR A QUEEN TO CRY?
OH, CATHERINE! PLEASE DON'T CRY! YOU'LL BECOME A QUEEN SOMEDAY!
IF A QUEEN WHO IS SUPPOSED TO MAKE HER PEOPLE HAPPY STARTS TO CRY, THEN EVERYBODY WILL BE SAD.
MISS CATHERINE!
IT'S TIME!
I SUPPOSE SO..

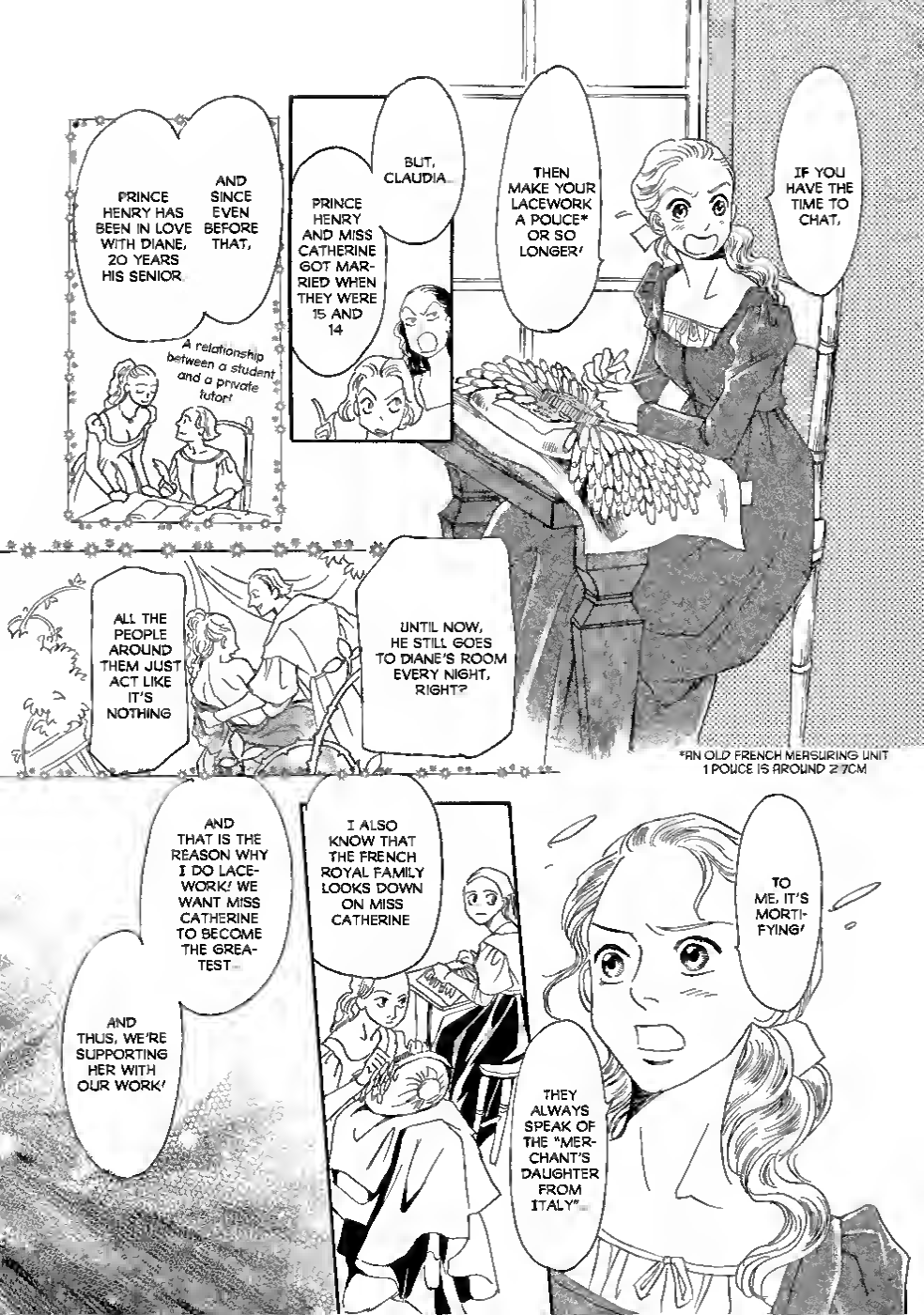
I'M AN ORPHAN AS WELL!
MY PARENTS ALSO DIED AFTER I WAS BORN!
glare
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OVER THERE? PLEASE REFRAIN FROM TALKING TO AN ORPHAN OF DIFFERENT STANDING.
YOUR PRIVATE TUTOR IS WAITING FOR YOU IN THE CONVENT'S HALL.
SHE'S NO DIFFERENT FROM A LITTLE SISTER TO ME!
APOLOGIZE TO CLAUDIA.
WE ARE VERY SORRY.
W...
LET'S MAKE A PROMISE, CATHERINE.
I'D LIKE TO STAY WITH YOU FOREVER, BUT I HAVE TO GO...
I'LL SEE YOU LATER, CLAUDIA.

WHEN THAT TIME COMES, YOU WILL ALSO BE WITH ME, CLAUDIA.
YOU'LL BE DOING LACEWORK BY MY SIDE.
PROMISE ME YOU'LL BECOME A PROPER QUEEN...
THAT YOU WILL MAKE A WORLD WHERE THERE WILL BE NO ORPHANS LIKE US.
I KNOW ALREADY.
ABOUT YOUR LATE PARENTS. YOUR MOTHER WAS THE FRENCH KING'S COUSIN.
YOUR FATHER, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS A MEMBER OF THE MEDICI FAMILY, A PROMINENT FIGURE IN ITALY...
MISS CATHERINE, YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT YOUR POSITION A BIT MORE.
IT'S A PROMISE.

SOMEDAY, YOU WILL MARRY INTO THE ROYAL HOUSE OF A HOSTILE COUNTRY.
WHEN THAT TIME COMES, YOU WILL THROW AWAY ALL OF YOUR LOVE
AND PLACE A ROYAL CROWN ON THE MEDICI FAMILY'S BLOOD!
HENRY, THE SECOND SON OF THE FRENCH KING,
AND CATHERINE, THE DAUGHTER OF ITALY'S MEDICI FAMILY!
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR MARRIAGE!
I WENT TO FRANCE TOGETHER WITH MISS CATHERINE...
AFTER ALL, IT HAD BEEN A PROMISE BETWEEN US

I THOUGHT OF MAKING A BIG LACE-WORK FOR YOU, BUT...
HER VEIL... HER DRESS... THEY LOOK SO WONDER-FUL..
NO MATTER HOW MANY CASTLES I SELL, IT'S JUST NOT ENOUGH.
I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANY-THING LIKE THIS... SHE IS LIKE THE VIRGIN MARY..
WOW!
NEVER FORGET...
SHE WANTS TO SHOW OFF THE MEDICI WEALTH, I GUESS...
RUMORS SAY SHE BROUGHT THOUSANDS OF WORK-MEN WITH HER AS WELL
CATHE-RINE...


I CAME WITH YOU JUST AS WE PROMISED
I'LL ALWAYS BE BY YOUR SIDE.. AND I'LL CONTINUE TO DO LACEWORK FOR YOU..
AND THAT'S WHY YOU, TOO,
SHOULD BE PROUD!!
AGAIN HE'S FRO-LICKING WITH THAT MISTRESS OF HIS
THEY DON'T EVEN TRY TO HIDE WHEN THEY'RE MAKING OUT!
LOOK AT THAT KISS! THEY ACT LIKE CATS IN HEAT!
SHUT UP!
THAT MISS CATHERINE STILL HASN'T BECOME PREGNANT, EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE BEEN MARRIED FOR FIVE YEARS NOW
IT'S BECAUSE OF PRINCE HENRY BEHAVING LIKE THAT

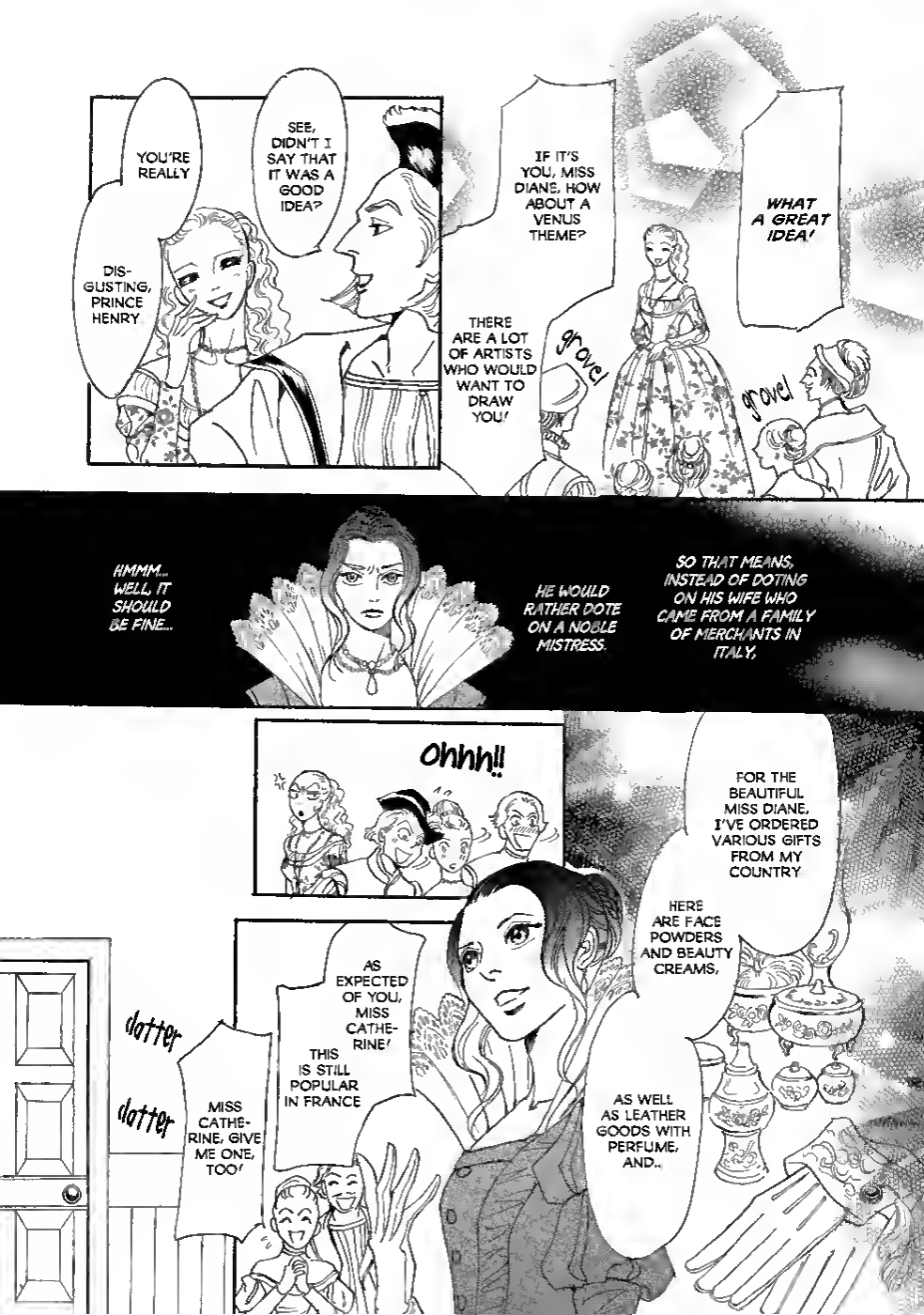

IF YOU HAVE THE TIME TO CHAT,
THEN MAKE YOUR LACEWORK A POUCE* OR SO LONGER!
BUT, CLAUDIA...
PRINCE HENRY AND MISS CATHERINE GOT MARRIED WHEN THEY WERE 15 AND 14
AND SINCE EVEN BEFORE THAT,
PRINCE HENRY HAS BEEN IN LOVE WITH DIANE, 20 YEARS HIS SENIOR...
A relationship between a student and a private tutor!
UNTIL NOW, HE STILL GOES TO DIANE'S ROOM EVERY NIGHT, RIGHT?
ALL THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM JUST ACT LIKE IT'S NOTHING
*AN OLD FRENCH MEASURING UNIT 1 POUCE IS AROUND 2.7CM
TO ME, IT'S MORTIFYING!
THEY ALWAYS SPEAK OF THE "MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER FROM ITALY"...
I ALSO KNOW THAT THE FRENCH ROYAL FAMILY LOOKS DOWN ON MISS CATHERINE
AND THAT IS THE REASON WHY I DO LACEWORK! WE WANT MISS CATHERINE TO BECOME THE GREATEST...
AND THUS, WE'RE SUPPORTING HER WITH OUR WORK!

WELL, IT CAN'T BE HELPED WHEN MISS CATHERINE LEFT THE CONVENT,
WHEN IT COMES TO MISS CATHERINE, CLAUDIA SURE DOES GET FIRED UP, DOESN'T SHE?
AND TOOK HER IN AS HER LADY-IN-WAITING
SHE TOOK CLAUDIA OUT OF THE ORPHANAGE
EXCUSE ME
ARE YOU DONE WITH THE LACE-WORK FOR THE EVENING DRESS?
COME ON!
WE CAN'T LOSE TO A MIDDLE-AGED MISTRESS!
Angang!
ROBERT!
ROBERT, WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
CLAUDIA.. PLEASE CONFIRM THEM
THE LACE DESIGNS HAVE ARRIVED
Yes!
GET BACK TO WORK!

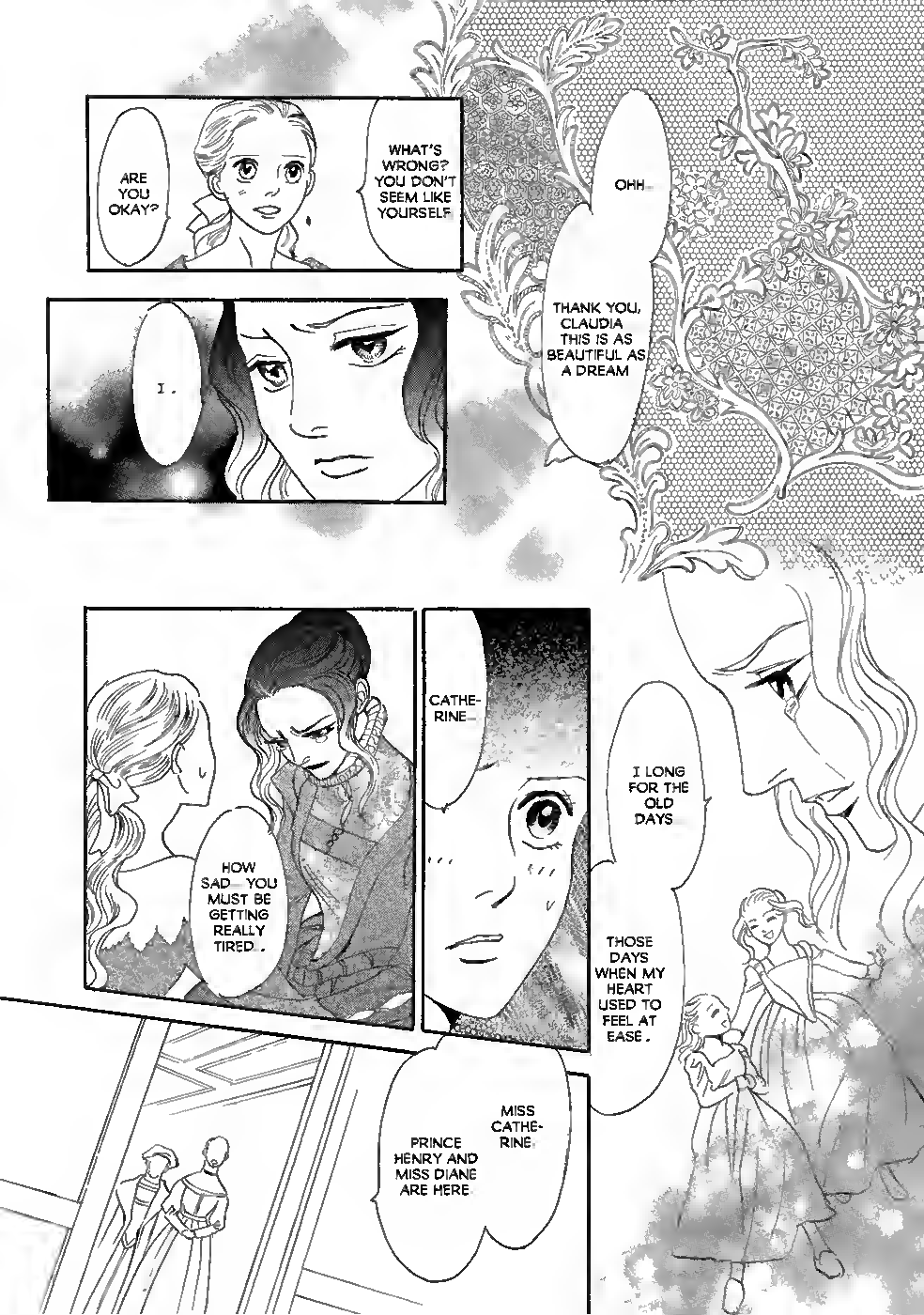
I GREW UP IN AN ORPHANAGE NEXT TO THAT CHURCH
M...
ME TOO!
WHILE I WAS IN THE ORPHANAGE, THE SISTERS TAUGHT ME HOW TO DO LACEWORK.
*PICTURES OF SAINTS
ME TOO... I WAS TAUGHT TO DRAW ICONS* AT THE CHURCH.
IS THAT HOW YOU BECAME AN ARTIST?
Heh heh.
WE'RE ON THE SAME BOAT, THEN.
WOW... WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN!
I TOOK THE WINDOWS OF MY HOMETOWN'S CHURCH AS A REFERENCE.
EVEN AS ORPHANS...
WE WERE ABLE TO LIVE KNOWING HOW JOYFUL IT WAS TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL PIECES OF ART.
...
OH MY, MISS CATHERINE!
WHAT BEAUTIFUL LACEWORK. I'M REALLY JEALOUS!
Really...
VESTIA'S LACES ARE VALUABLE.
IT'S ALSO SOMETHING YOU CAN'T OBTAIN EASILY.
THAT'S RIGHT...
MISS CATHERINE GAVE ME THE JOY OF CREATING LACEWORK.
THAT'S WHY I SHOULD CONTINUE LIVING...

WELL THEN, SHALL WE INDULGE OURSELVES WITH THESE FINE FOODS?
SO WORKERS.
THIS COLLAR ALONE TOOK 3 WORKERS A YEAR TO MAKE
WHEN I MARRIED INTO THIS FAMILY, I BROUGHT FIFTY LACE-WORKERS WITH ME.
PRINCE ZITO WAS TALKING ABOUT...
SO THIS IS THE RASP-BERRY GELATO...
YOU NEED TO TEACH OUR COOK HOW TO MAKE THESE!
And this is a pro-fiterole
This is a macaroon
A DESSERT AS COLD AS SNOW.
HOW COLD!
PRINCE HENRY AND MISS DIANE ARE HERE!

THE PRINCE...
HE SEEMS TO BE IN GOOD SPIRITS, THE PRINCE
MISS DIANE.
I WONDER IF MY HUSBAND PLAYED A PRANK ON YOU
ARE YOU LISTENING? PRINCE HENRY IS REALLY MEAN.
MY... MISS CATHERINE IS HERE AS WELL.
HOW'S EVERYONE TODAY?
PRINCE HENRY,
JUST WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH MISS DIANE?
DIANE SHE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A WOMAN OF OVER FORTY YEARS..
THIS PERSON... IS MY HUSBAND'S MISTRESS...
THIS PERSON KNOWS HOW OLD I ALREADY AM, AND YET,
HE STILL WANTS ME TO HAVE NUDE PICTURES OF MYSELF


YOU'RE REALLY DISGUSTING, PRINCE HENRY
SEE, DIDN'T I SAY THAT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA?
IF IT'S YOU, MISS DIANE, HOW ABOUT A VENUS THEME?
WHAT A GREAT IDEA!
THERE ARE A LOT OF ARTISTS WHO WOULD WANT TO DRAW YOU!
grovel
grovel
HMMM... WELL, IT SHOULD BE FINE...
HE WOULD RATHER DOTE ON A NOBLE MISTRESS.
SO THAT MEANS, INSTEAD OF DOTING ON HIS WIFE WHO CAME FROM A FAMILY OF MERCHANTS IN ITALY,
Ohhh!!
FOR THE BEAUTIFUL MISS DIANE, I'VE ORDERED VARIOUS GIFTS FROM MY COUNTRY
HERE ARE FACE POWDERS AND BEAUTY CREAMS,
AS WELL AS LEATHER GOODS WITH PERFUME, AND..
AS EXPECTED OF YOU, MISS CATHERINE!
THIS IS STILL POPULAR IN FRANCE
clatter
clatter
MISS CATHERINE, GIVE ME ONE, TOO!

MISS CATHE-RINE...
CLAUDIA FROM THE LACE MILL HAS AR-RIVED.
drip
CLAU-DIA!
THE LACEWORK FOR YOUR EVENING DRESS IS READY.
MISS CATHERINE
CLAUDIA, HOW ARE YOU?


ARE YOU OKAY?
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE YOURSELF
I.
OHH…
THANK YOU, CLAUDIA THIS IS AS BEAUTIFUL AS A DREAM
HOW SAD… YOU MUST BE GETTING REALLY TIRED.
CATHE-RINE…
I LONG FOR THE OLD DAYS
THOSE DAYS WHEN MY HEART USED TO FEEL AT EASE.
PRINCE HENRY AND MISS DIANE ARE HERE
MISS CATHE-RINE.

SHE'S ALSO A LACE WORKER I'VE BROUGHT WITH ME FROM ITALY.
SHE IS MY CHILD-HOOD FRIEND.
CATHE-RINE... WHO IS THIS GIRL?
DIANE...? THAT MISTRESS?
THAT'S CONVE-NIENT!
I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE LACE LIKE YOURS
BE MADE FOR DIANE HERE.
YOU WEARING THOSE LACES IS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT.
THEN, IF THE BEAUTIFUL DIANE WERE TO WEAR ONE OF THOSE...

CAN'T YOU CREATE LACEWORK FOR DIANE?
THEN SHE WOULD BE EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN A GODDESS IN HEAVEN
FOR HIS MISTRESS?
FOR THAT OLD HAG TWENTY YEARS OLDER THAN HIM?!
I SHOULD CREATE LACEWORK TO THE ONE WHO IS MORE IMPORTANT, HIS REAL WIFE, MISS CATHERINE!
I KINDLY BEG YOU,
CATHERINE.
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!
HOW MEAN! THAT STUPID HUSBAND!
I DON'T WANT THIS!!! WHY WOULD I CREATE LACEWORK FOR THAT MISTRESS?!
PFFT—
STUPID, YOU SAY?
AH.

IT'S ALL RIGHT!
THE PART ABOUT HIM BEING STUPID WAS A GOOD ONE!
HA HA HA HA!
NO... THAT..
Ahahaha!
SORRY... SUCH A RUDE THING...
LORD GIERI FROM FIRENZE HAS ARRIVED!
MISS CATHERINE!
YOU REALLY ARE MY ONLY REAL FRIEND
CLAUDIA..
LORD GIERI...

MISS CATHERINE.
I'VE COME TO TELL YOU WHAT THE STARS ARE SAYING.
CLAUDIA, YOU MAY NOW GO.
O.. OKAY ..
WHAT A WEIRD PERSON
I WONDER WHO HE IS
KYA!
bump
clatter
RO-BERT!
CLAUDIA? S...SORRY
WHAT BEAUTIFUL STONES ..
WHAT ARE THESE?
DON'T TOUCH THEM WITH BARE HANDS!
THEY'RE POISONOUS!

I USE THESE STONES AS AN INGREDIENT FOR MY PICTURES.
BUT... DON'T PUT THESE INTO YOUR MOUTH THEY'RE POISONOUS
EH?
YOU'RE MAKING INGREDIENTS FOR YOUR PICTURES NOW?
MISS CATHERINE WILL USE THEM, I THINK.
DEPENDING ON THE QUANTITY APPLIED, THE POISONOUS PART CAN BE USED AS A MEDICINE AS WELL.
AH, THAT'S RIGHT!
THE DE' MEDICI FAMILY DEALS WITH MEDICINE!
MISS CATHERINE SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THEM.
YOU ALWAYS... SEEM SO HAPPY
WHO IS THIS YOUNG MAN?
HE'S AN ARTIST WHO SERVES ME.
HE LOOKS VERY BEAUTIFUL WHEN HE GOES OUT, I LET HIM CARRY A PARASOL.

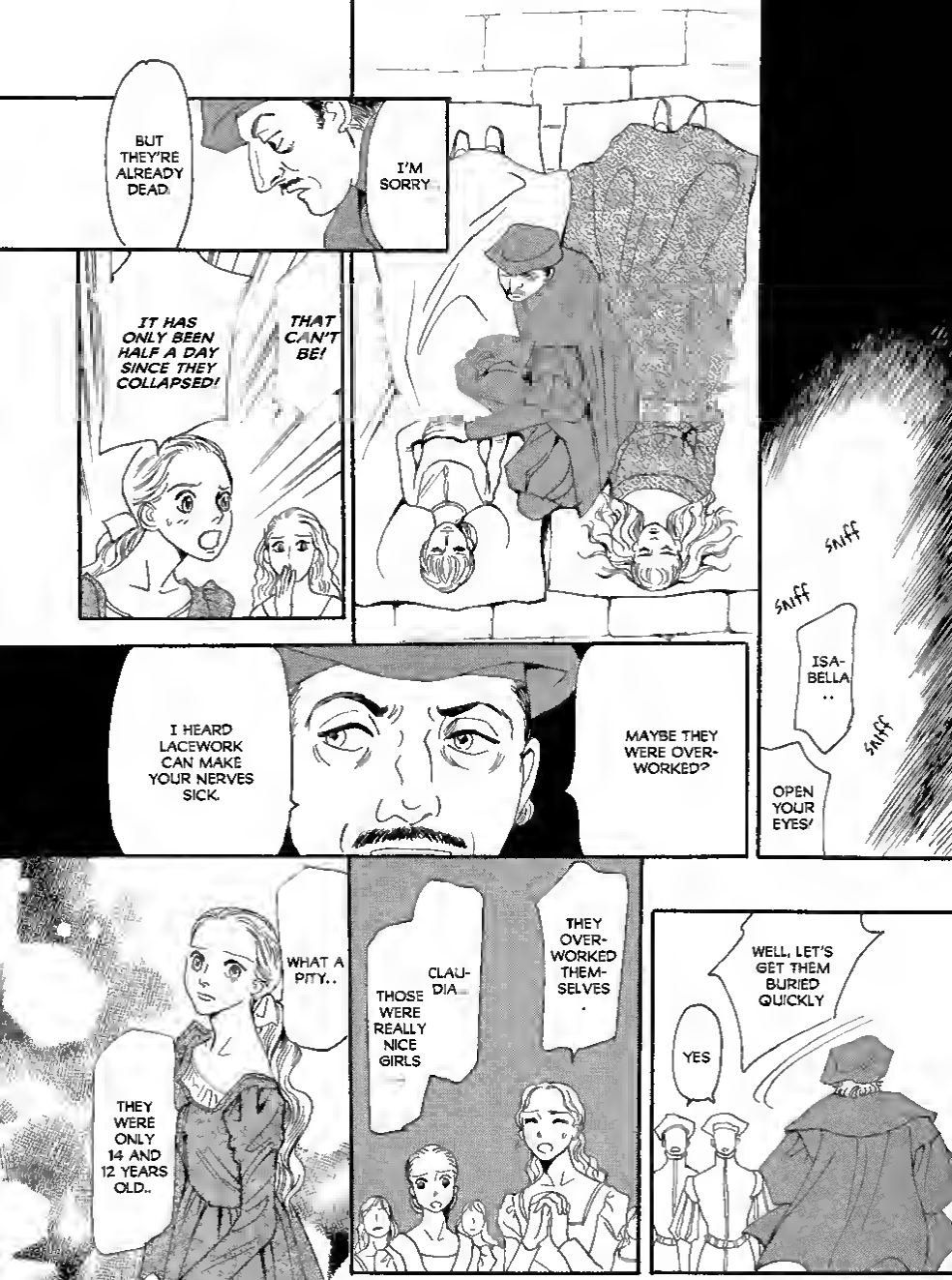
DOESN'T THE CROWN WISH FOR IT?!
YOU CAN'T FALTER NOW!
BLACK HAIR
DARK EYES
HE EXACTLY FITS WHAT THE STARS DESCRIBED
ARE YOU SERIOUSLY WANTING TO PERFORM A RITUAL?
YES. LET'S TAKE THIS YOUNG MAN.
WHAT'S MORE, HE'S INFATUATED WITH HIS MISTRESS AND DOESN'T TOUCH YOU AT ALL!
KING FRANÇOIS HAS TWO LINEAR DESCEN-DANTS AND YOUR HUSBAND IS THE YOUNGER OF THE TWO!
OR ELSE YOUR POSITION WILL CHANGE!
WE NEED TO MEND OUR WAYS AROUND THE STARS!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? YOU MUST GET HENRY'S BROTHER OUT OF THE WAY! AND THEN MAKE YOUR CHILD THE KING OF FRANCE!

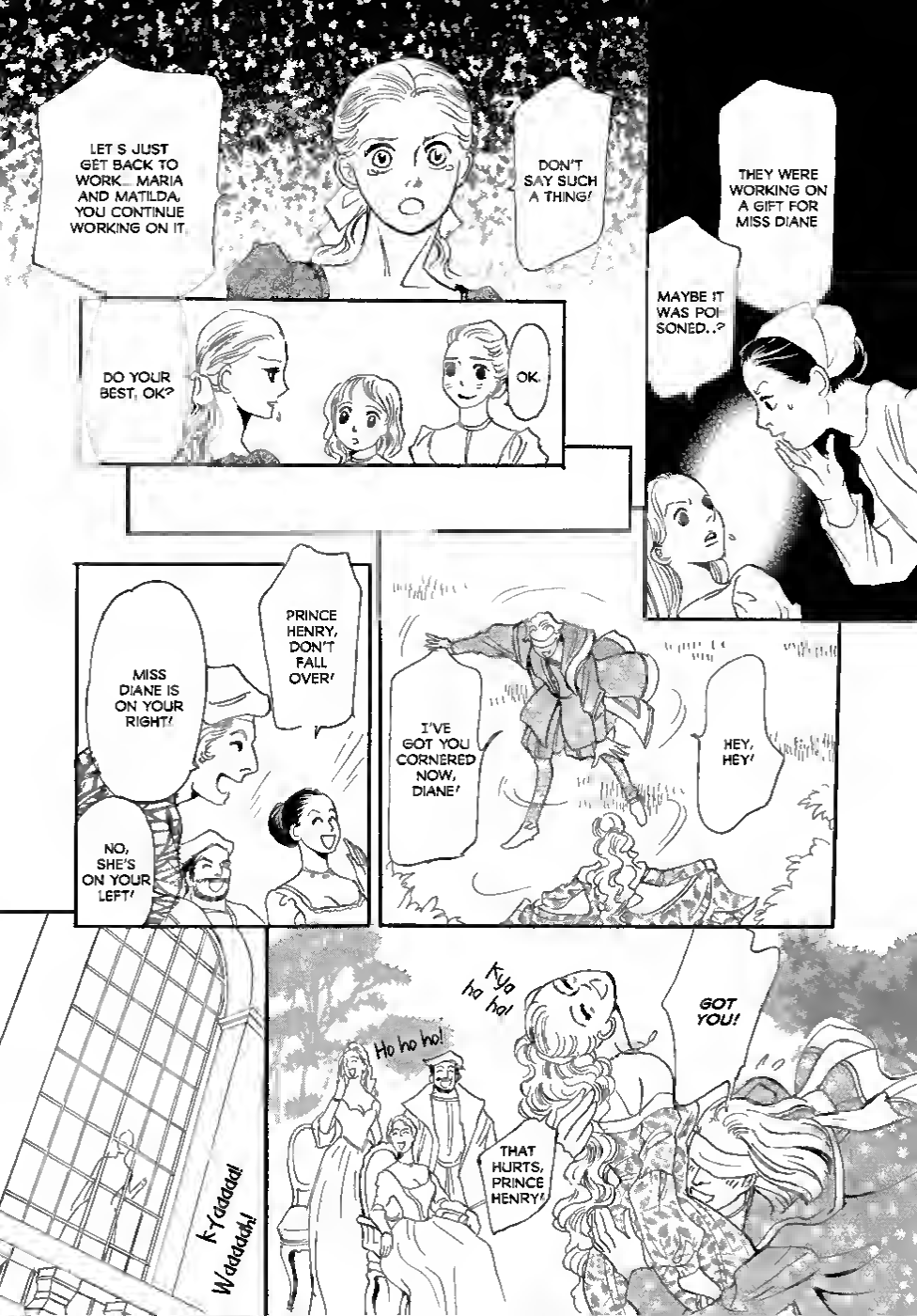
AND THAT'S WHY WE NEED A SACRIFICE OF BLOOD!
WE SHALL HOLD THAT MAN'S HEAD HIGH!
CLAUDIA...
ASIDE FROM THAT I WAS WONDERING IF YOUR POISON IS READY.
THE MOST FEARFUL STAR IS DIANE. WE NEED TO GET RID OF HER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
WE MUST MAKE OUR MOVES QUICKLY
YOU MUST NOT GET SENTIMENTAL.

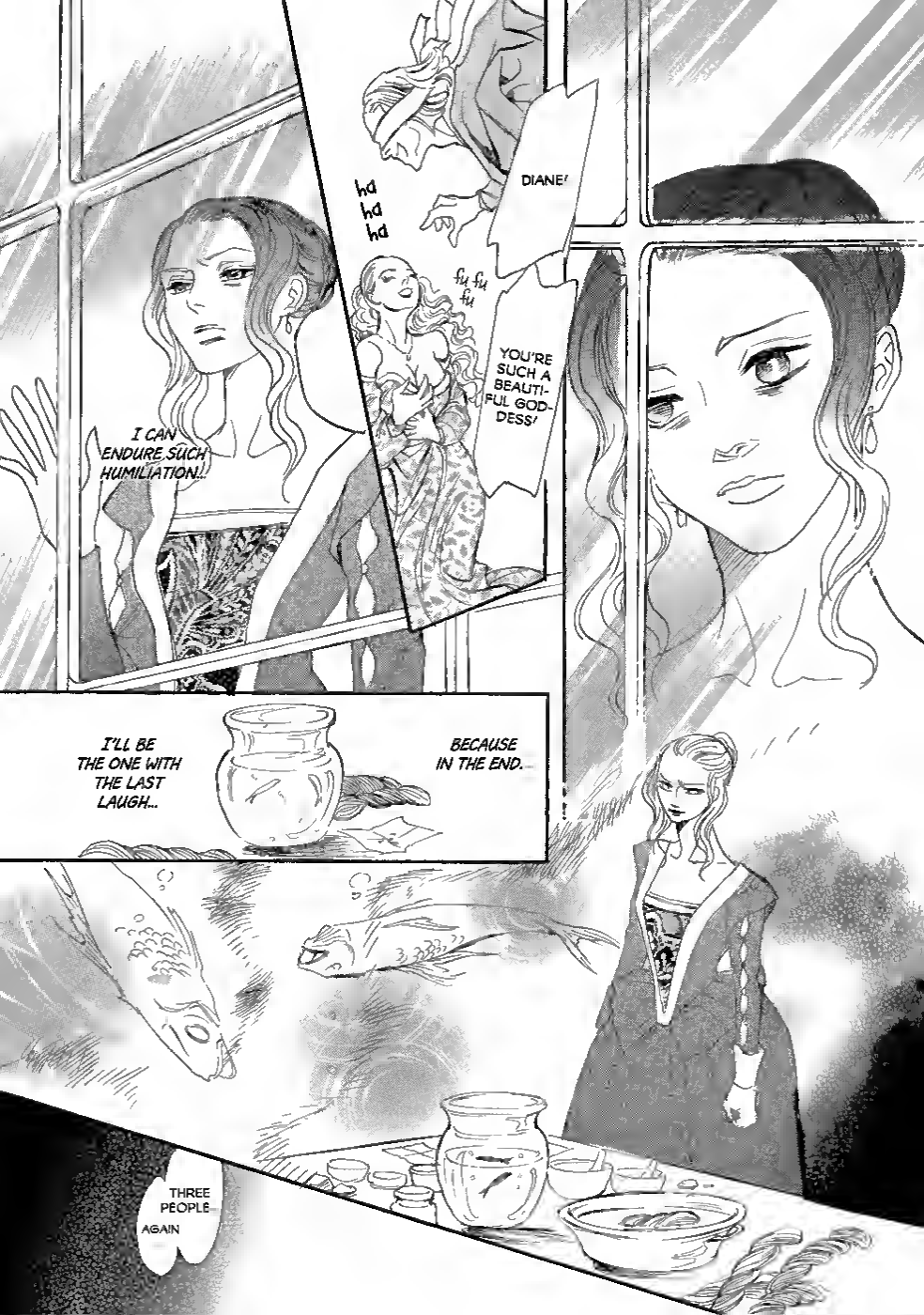
OH!
CLAU-DIA!
I WAS SENT BY MISS CATHE-RINE!
Wait a mi-nute
What's with this...
mood?
I HEARD IT WAS DYED WITH A SPECIAL PRODUCT
SHE SAID IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A GIFT FOR MISS DIANE
Hmmm
IT SMELLS FUNNY, TOO.
THAT FLAX SURE HAS A STRANGE COLOR
MISS CATHERINE TOLD ME THAT YOU MUSN'T TOUCH THIS THREAD.
DON'T GET THAT ANGRY
Hey, Catherine... share your lacework with my Venus
OH RIGHT.. THAT ONE
AS I THOUGHT, I HAVE TO MAKE IT.

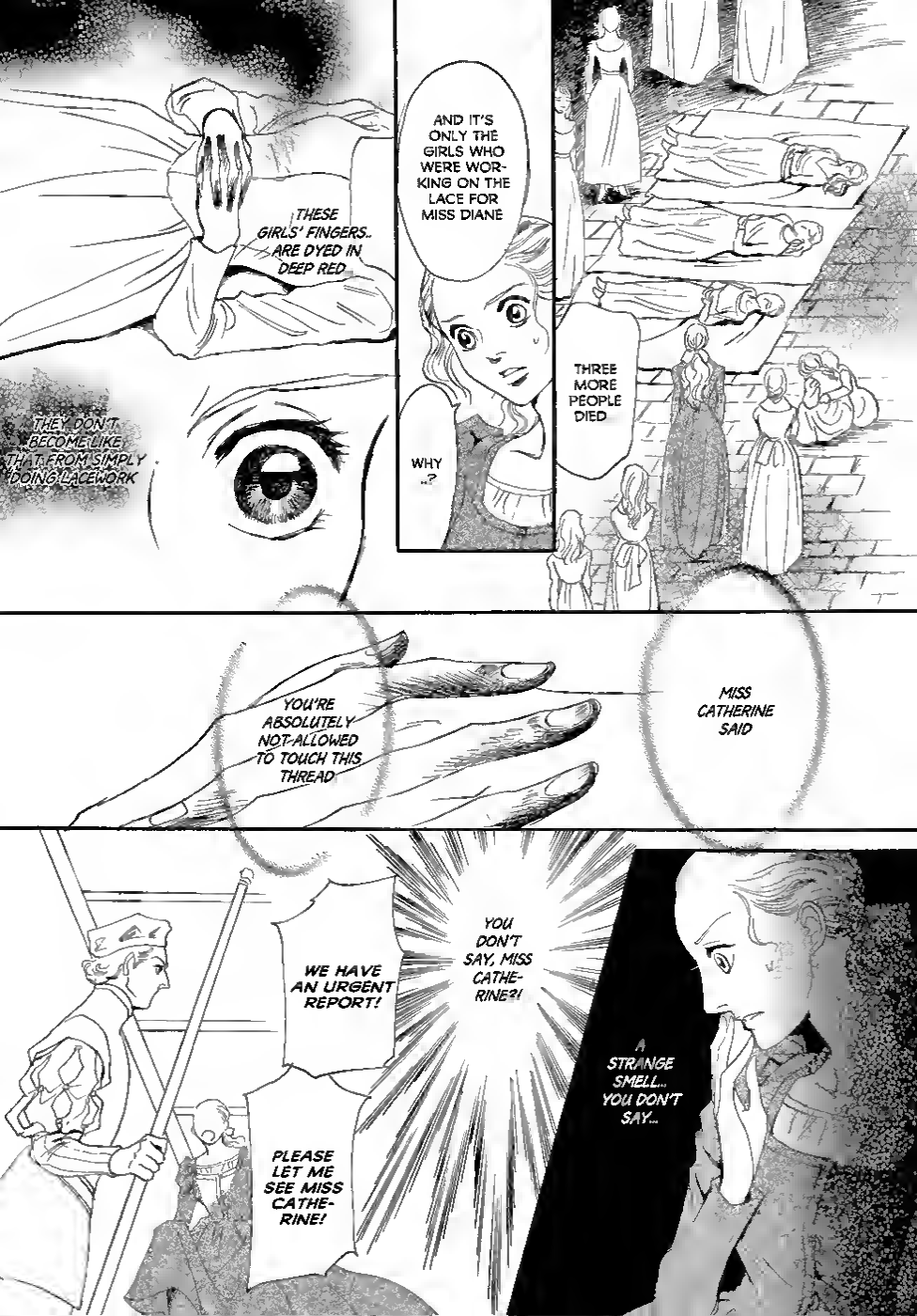
I— FEEL THE SAME
AND SHE DOESN'T WANT AN ANGEL TO CREATE THINGS FOR DIANE
MISS CATHERINE.
SAID SO?
"CLAUDIA IS MY ANGEL." THAT IS WHAT SHE SAID
"I FEEL THE SAME."
"CLAUDIA IS MY ANGEL."
I'LL LET THE YOUNG GIRLS DO IT AS AN EXERCISE
I... I UNDERSTAND!
OK.
WELL THEN, SEE YOU!
YOU DON'T NEED TO PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT, JUST DO IT PROPERLY!
YOU GUYS, THIS IS A LACE FOR THAT MIDDLE-AGED MISTRESS!
Oh no!
SINCE WHEN DID YOU DEVELOP THAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP?!
Tsk!!!

ALRIGHT, LET'S DO THIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
IT SMELLS SWEET
WHAT A STRANGE COLOR
UGH
Clatter
ISA-BELLA?! NATA-LIA?!
GET A HOLD OF YOUR-SELVES... DOCTOR! GET A DOCTOR!
KYAAAAA!


BUT THEY'RE ALREADY DEAD.
I'M SORRY
IT HAS ONLY BEEN HALF A DAY SINCE THEY COLLAPSED!
THAT CAN'T BE!
SNIFF
SNIFF
ISA-BELLA..
SNIFF
OPEN YOUR EYES!
I HEARD LACEWORK CAN MAKE YOUR NERVES SICK.
MAYBE THEY WERE OVER-WORKED?
WHAT A PITY..
THEY WERE ONLY 14 AND 12 YEARS OLD..
CLAU-DIA
THOSE WERE REALLY NICE GIRLS
THEY OVER-WORKED THEM-SELVES.
WELL, LET'S GET THEM BURIED QUICKLY
YES


LET S JUST GET BACK TO WORK... MARIA AND MATILDA, YOU CONTINUE WORKING ON IT.
DON'T SAY SUCH A THING!
THEY WERE WORKING ON A GIFT FOR MISS DIANE
MAYBE IT WAS POISONED..?
DO YOUR BEST, OK?
OK.
PRINCE HENRY, DON'T FALL OVER!
MISS DIANE IS ON YOUR RIGHT!
NO, SHE'S ON YOUR LEFT!
I'VE GOT YOU CORNERED NOW, DIANE!
HEY, HEY!
K-Kaaaa!
Waaaah!
Ho ho ho!
Kya ha ha!
GOT YOU!
THAT HURTS, PRINCE HENRY!


I CAN ENDURE SUCH HUMILIATION...
ha ha ha
DIANE!
fu fu fu
YOU'RE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL GODDESS!
I'LL BE THE ONE WITH THE LAST LAUGH...
BECAUSE IN THE END...
THREE PEOPLE AGAIN


THESE GIRLS' FINGERS... ARE DYED IN DEEP RED
THEY DON'T BECOME LIKE THAT FROM SIMPLY DOING LACEWORK
AND IT'S ONLY THE GIRLS WHO WERE WORKING ON THE LACE FOR MISS DIANE
WHY ...?
THREE MORE PEOPLE DIED
MISS CATHERINE SAID
YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY NOT ALLOWED TO TOUCH THIS THREAD
A STRANGE SMELL... YOU DON'T SAY...
YOU DON'T SAY, MISS CATHERINE?!
WE HAVE AN URGENT REPORT!
PLEASE LET ME SEE MISS CATHERINE!

MISS CATHE-RINE!
MISS CATHE-RINE...
AHHHH!!!
DON'T WORRY... YOU'LL GO
NO!
TO PARA-DISE!
PLEASE FOR-GIVE ME!
WHEN THIS HEAD IS CUT FROM YOUR TORSO, THE SUN THAT HAD WAN-DERED OFF FROM ORBIT
WILL BE ATTRAC-TED TO YOUR BLOOD..
AND THE ROYAL CROWN WILL SHINE ON THE DE' MEDICI'S HEAD!!

FOR YOUR HANDS, MISS CATHE-RINE!
CATHE-RINE!

fling
STOP IT!
CLAUDIA!
AH!
ROBERT, RUN AWAY QUICKLY!
THEY MADE ME TAKE SOME MEDICINE— I CAN'T MOVE AT ALL—
SWOOSH
clatter

WHY ARE YOU HERE?!
CLAU-DIA.
CATHE-RINE...
THE THREAD OF THE LACE MEANT FOR MISS DIANE...
THIS GIRL... HOW DID SHE...
DIDN'T I TELL YOU NOT TO LET ANYBODY INTO THIS ROOM?!
THE RITUAL IS RUINED!
THEY DIED OF THE THREAD YOU LET ROBERT BRING ME!
MANY GIRLS WHO WERE WORKING ON IT DIED!
I THINK IT WAS DYED IN POISON!
I SEE. THEN THAT MEANS IT WORKED PROPER-LY...
THE POISON I MADE...
crackle
crackle

TO ERASE..
DIANE...
THIS MEANS BAD LUCK! WE CAN'T DO THE RITUAL NOW!
THERE'S FIRE!
SOMEONE! PUT IT OUT!
PUT OUT THE FIRE!
CUT IT OUT!
DON'T YOU REMEMBER OUR PROMISE?! THAT YOU'LL BECOME A PROPER QUEEN AND MAKE A WORLD WHERE EVERYBODY IS HAPPY!
USING LACEWORK AS A TOOL TO KILL SOMEONE...
I CAN'T FORGIVE THAT! DOING SUCH A THING IS DEMONIC!

I'M WILLING TO CHANGE FOR THE WORSE...
THAT'S WHY... TO OBTAIN THE THRONE
IN MY CONDITION RIGHT NOW, WHAT COULD I POSSIBLY DO?!
TO DO THAT, I NEED TO OBTAIN STRONGER POWERS!
WHO HAS DONE NOTHING TO YOU?
YOU'D EVEN KILL ROBERT,
TO DO THIS,
AND CUT OFF HIS HEAD!
TAKE DRUGS TO MAKE HIM UNABLE TO MOVE,
THAT'S RIGHT! EVEN IF I HAVE TO MAKE YOUR LOVER

slap
THE CATHERINE I KNOW
WOULD NEVER BE TRAY HER MORALS FOR SOME-THING SO LOW.
NEVER.

NEVER
GET OUT OF HERE, CLAUDIA...
MY ONLY... ANGEL...
TO FULFILL OUR WONDERFUL PROMISE...
I NEED TO OBTAIN A POWER STRONG ENOUGH TO DESTROY THE ROYAL FAMILY... AND GO ON.
I WILL ABSOLUTELY DYE THIS PLACE IN POISON...
AND I DON'T WANT TO SHOW THIS KIND OF APPEARANCE TO YOU

IF THE GUARDS FIND YOU,
YOU WILL BE KILLED FOR SURE!
QUICK! BEHIND THE BIG MIRROR IN MY ROOM IS A HIDDEN PASSAGE.
FOR OUR... PROMISE?
PROTECT MY CLAUDIA!
ROBERT, YOU CAN MOVE AGAIN, RIGHT?!
MY HEART WILL BE WITH YOU FOREVER!
CATHERINE!

CLAUDIA!
ARE YOU DONE WITH MY ORDER?
OH! THIS WILL SURELY MAKE PRINCE RENARD HAPPY
AS EXPECTED OF YOU! AND YOU SAY YOU COME FROM ITALY?
EVEN IF YOU'RE FAR AWAY, MY HEART WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU...
GOODBYE... MY ONE AND ONLY ANGEL...
YOUR HUSBAND'S DESIGNS ARE BEAUTIFUL AND WELL-SOUGHT HERE IN PARIS.
MISS CATHERINE'S COLLARS
THE FRENCH WOMEN ALL WANT TO IMITATE
AND HIS FATHER, KING FRANÇOIS, DIED WHILE OUT HUNTING.
AH, YES. THE FIRST PRINCE DIED OF A MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS.
AND MISS CATHERINE HAS BECOME QUEEN, I HEARD?

THERE'S A RUMOR GOING AROUND SAYING THAT ITALIAN WOMAN MASTERMINDED THEM ALL
CATHERINE...
HAVE YOU FOUND HAPPINESS SOMEHOW?
CATHERINE GAVE BIRTH TO THREE PRINCES.
AFTER HER HUSBAND'S DEATH, SHE REIGNED AND MOVED THE FRENCH ECONOMY AND POLITICS FOR A LONG TIME.
THE BEAUTIFUL LACE DECORATING HER NECK WAS PROTECTED BY THE MEDICI FAMILY.
THEY DEVELOPED IT SO MUCH THAT IT BECAME AN INDUSTRY THAT SHOOK THE WORLD...
LACE PROMISE - THE END.

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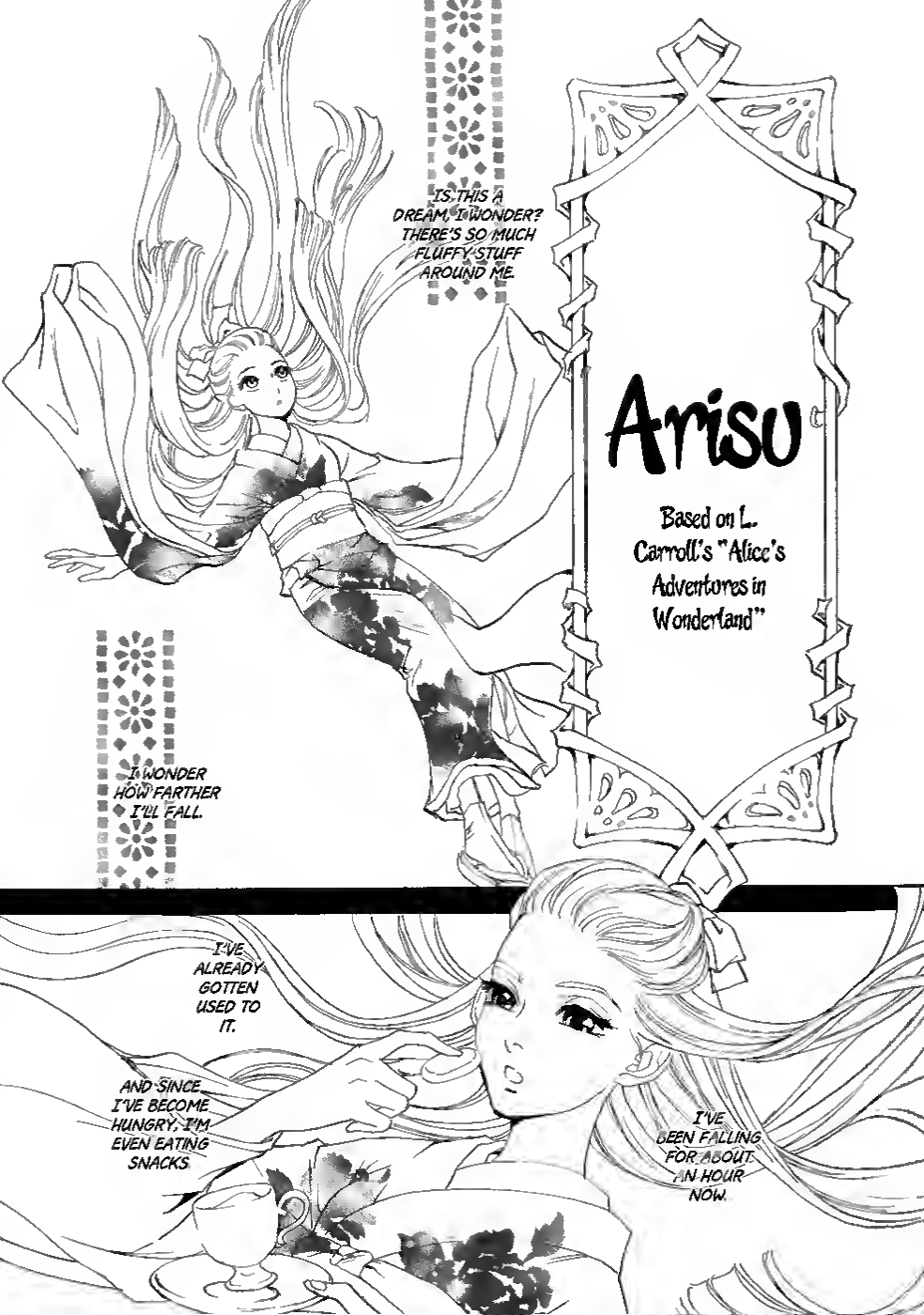
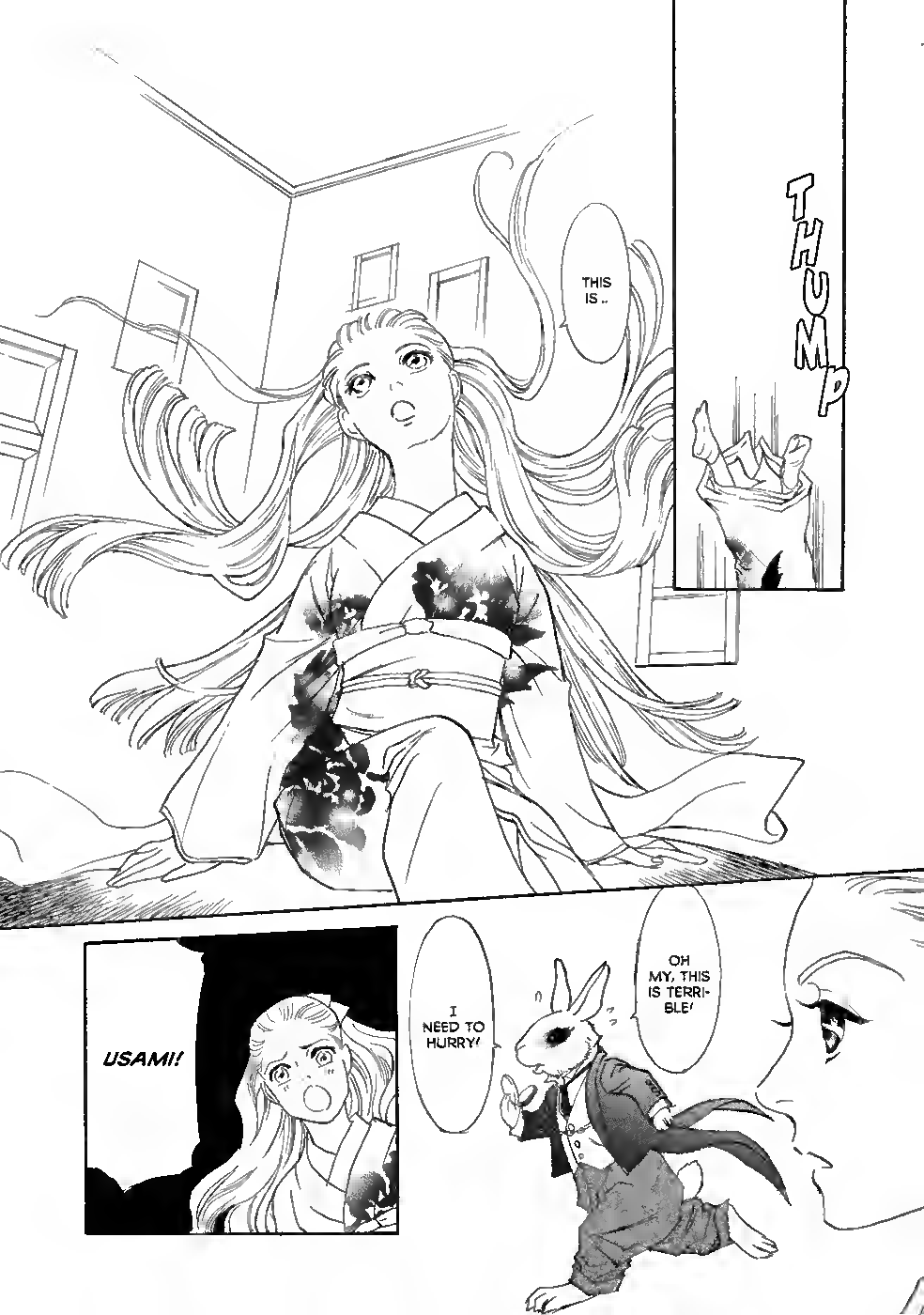
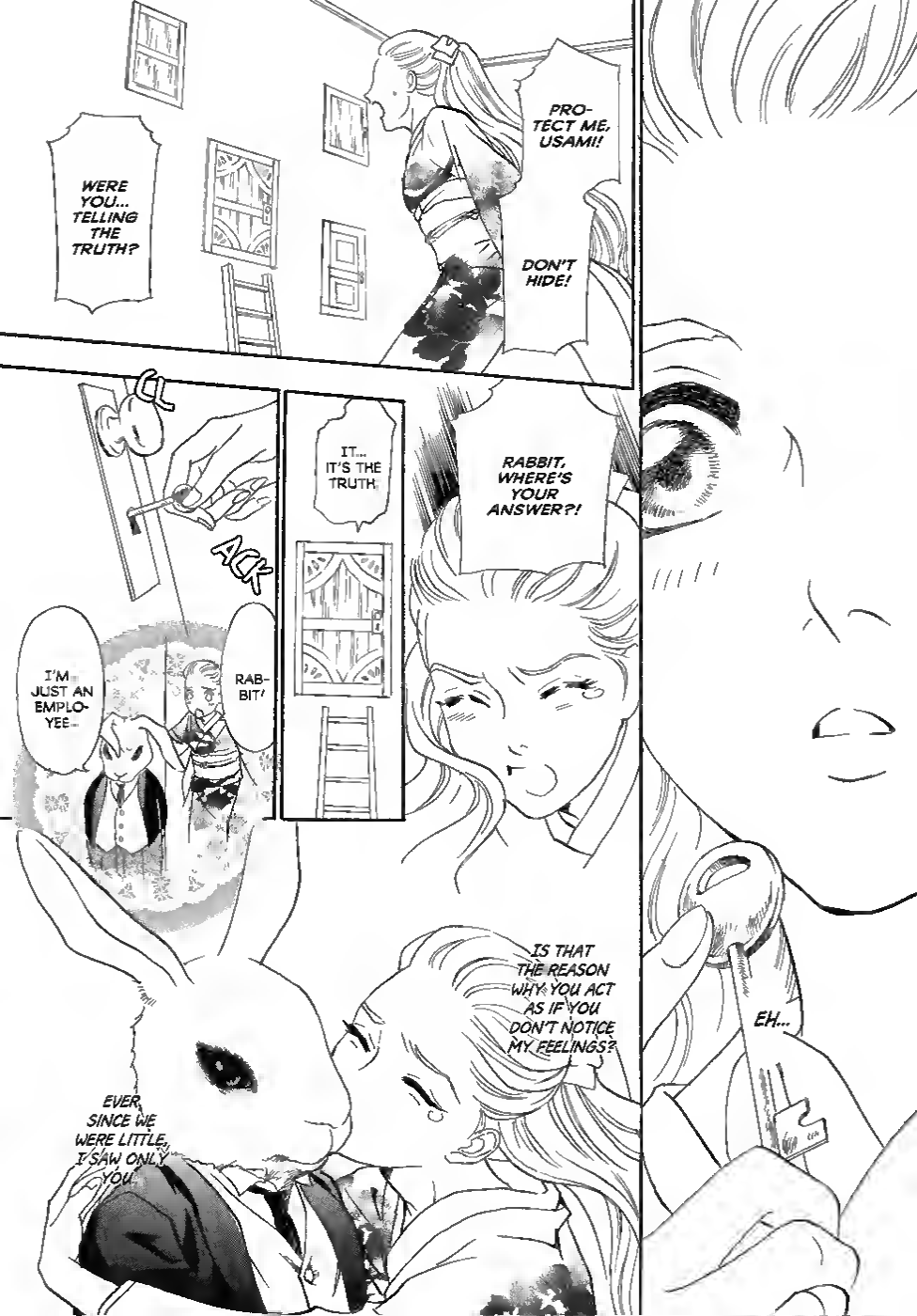

IS THIS A DREAM, I WONDER? THERE'S SO MUCH FLUFFY STUFF AROUND ME.
Arisu
Based on L. Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"
I WONDER HOW FARTHER I'LL FALL.
I'VE ALREADY GOTTEN USED TO IT.
AND SINCE I'VE BECOME HUNGRY, I'M EVEN EATING SNACKS.
I'VE BEEN FALLING FOR ABOUT AN HOUR NOW.


THUMP
THIS IS..
USAMI!
OH MY, THIS IS TERRIBLE!
I NEED TO HURRY!

AH!
BUT YOU'VE SWORN THAT YOU WILL BE WITH ME AND PROTECT ME, EVEN WHEN I GROW UP.
IT WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY FOR SURE.
WHAT WILL BECOME OF THIS PROMISE BETWEEN US?
YOUNG LADY, THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL FROM TOYOSU-SAMA ..
THAT CAN'T BE USAMI, RIGHT?
WAIT A MINUTE! THIS IS THE DREAM WORLD.
AND THAT OVER THERE IS A RABBIT RUNNING ON TWO LEGS.
twitch
twitch

FASTER! FASTER! I DON'T HAVE TIME LEFT!
THAT VOICE!
YOUNG LADY ARIKO!
YOU REALLY ARE USAMI, AREN'T YOU?!
WHY ARE YOU DRESSED UP LIKE A RABBIT?! SHOW YOURSELF!
bump
CRASH
DON'T I HAVE TO DRESS UP LIKE THIS?!
IF I LOOK LIKE A HUMAN, I CAN'T SAY THAT I LOVE YOU, RIGHT?!
SLAM


PRO-TECT ME, USAMI!
DON'T HIDE!
WERE YOU... TELLING THE TRUTH?
RABBIT, WHERE'S YOUR ANSWER?!
IT... IT'S THE TRUTH.
ACK
RAB-BIT!
I'M JUST AN EMPLO-YEE.
EH...
IS THAT THE REASON WHY YOU ACT AS IF YOU DON'T NOTICE MY FEELINGS?
EVER SINCE WE WERE LITTLE, I SAW ONLY YOU.

ARIKO-SAN...
ARIKO-SAN!
Ah...
WHAT HAP-PENED?
IS YOUR ROOM TOO COLD?
I HAD A DAYDREAM DURING THE MARRIAGE INTER-VIEW?
THIS IS.. THE TOYOSU'S FAMILY GUEST ROOM...
SHALL I BRING YOU SOMETHING WARM TO DRINK?
TAP
Sigh
AH... THAT'S THE SAME KEY FROM MY DREAM.

THAT'S THE SAME DOOR I SAW IN MY DREAM!
THERE ARE SMALL DOORS ON THE WALL... WHAT A WEIRD INTERIOR...
CHICK

MUMMIES OF FIVE WOMEN FOUND IN MANSION
SHE WON'T LEAVE USAMI'S SIDE EVEN FOR A SECOND
AND POOR ARIKO JUST HAD TO SEE A CUT-OFF HUMAN HEAD
WAS ACTUALLY A SERIAL KILLER?
THAT CAN'T BE! THE HEIR TO THE TOYOSU FAMILY WHO PROPOSED TO HER
KYAAAAAAAA
USAMI KEPT SAYING HE'LL PROTECT ARIKO EVER SINCE HE WAS LITTLE
I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO DO FOR HIM THAN TO BE WITH HER
ARISU - THE END

OMAKE
My name is Kimiko Kamata.
Everybody, thank you very much for buying "Maboroshi Koikitan".
The stories in this book were formerly published in "Really Scary Fairytales"
and these Scary Tales" are mysterious as well as licentious and cruel
HUH?!
MY COMICS AREN'T LICENTIOUS OR CRUEL AT ALL!!!
And moreover...
the stories are divided into Japanese and Western themes. Isn't it a slightly lukewarm taste?
I'M TALKING ABOUT THAT LUKE-WARM!
IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU OPEN THE MICROWAVE DOOR TO WARM A CUP OF COFFEE ONLY TO FIND ANOTHER CUP OF COFFEE FROM THE DAY BEFORE...
I... I...

"Swan Ninja Anecdotes" was a story I made based on the "Swan Lake".

The main character, Shiori, is actually Audette changed into a white ninja.

DON'T WASTE PAGES GET TO THE REAL TOPIC, PLEASE

TEE HEE

"THAT WILL ADD EVEN MORE LUKE-WARMNESS TO THE NATURAL TASTE."

"SORRY FOR THIS LUKEWARM WORK."

For "Lace Promise", I slightly changed the appearance and made a story about the real Catherine de' Medici and how she maybe was.

"Edo Love Dance" is based on "Carmen", who can't decide on several men.

In "Lace Promise", there's this setting of poison in laces...

And it seems that it really happened at that time... a gift dyed in poison...

Absit Omen!

"Swan Lake", "Carmen" and "The Nutcracker" are ballets. Just in case you don't know...

"Doll" is based on "The Nutcracker".